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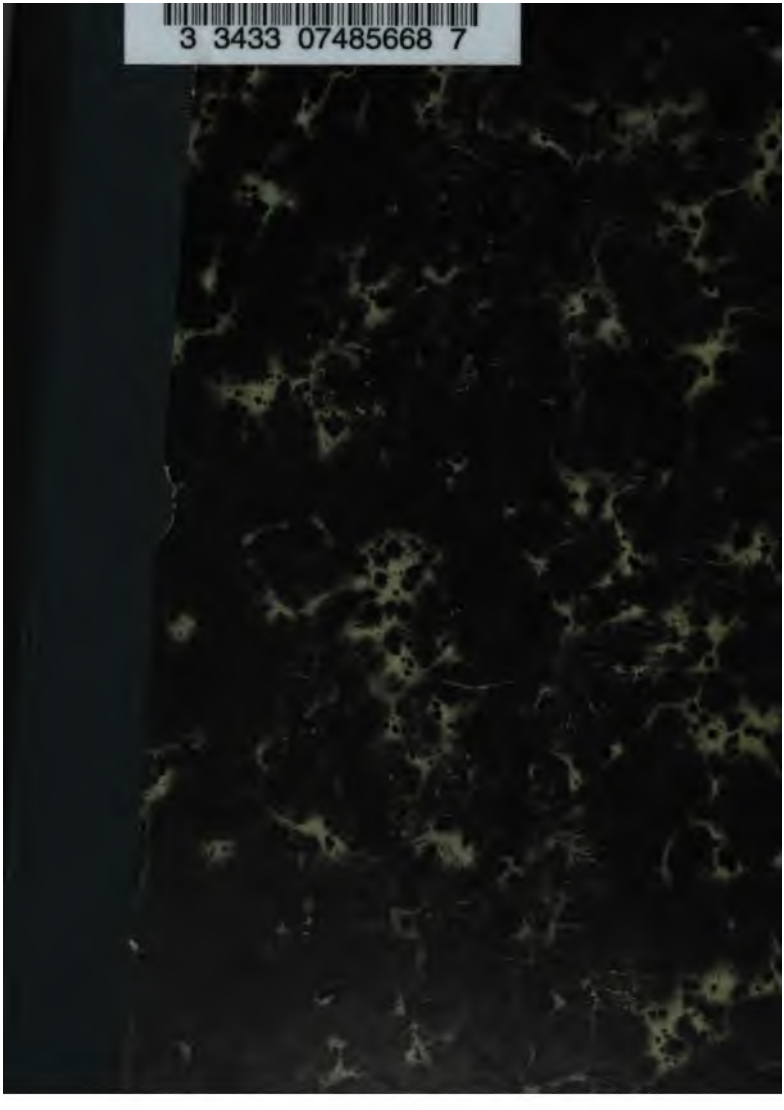

THE LAKE OF NYNEE TAL.

Front. Vol. I.

MY ESCAPE

FROM

THE MUTINIES IN OUDH.

A WOUNDED OFFICER.

[Maj. Robert D. Gibney.]

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MY ESCAPE

FROM

THE MUTINIES IN OUDH.

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CHAPTER I.

Before saying anything about myself, I will mention those to whom I owe my being. They, that is, my parents, were both well born, well connected, and perhaps, what is a better thing in these matter of fact days, pretty well to do in the world; there was enough for comfort at home, and sufficient to spare for the wants of those around.

At an early age my father entered the army, and served with more or less distinction throughout the Peninsular Campaign, attaining the rank of major. He was then placed on half-pay, peace having been restored.

This going on half-pay was, to him, rather a source of pleasure than otherwise, as he had recently married, and discovered that after thirty, a

quiet, peaceful home, with one to care about you, is preferable to hard fare, hard knocks, and small thanks.

Much of the Major's boyhood had been passed in Monmouthshire, and though years had passed since he had visited the scenes of his youth, still memory clung to them; and now that he had done with soldiery and had leisure to look round, he determined on travelling into that country, and ascertain if any estate, suitable to his taste and means, was obtainable.

Without much difficulty, an estate near the town of Chepstow was found; and after a short delay in repairing, painting, and lawyers, Major Villars settled himself on it as proprietor.

The house was one of those delightful old rambling abodes, built in no particular style—still picturesque looking, cool in summer, and warm in winter. The front was nearly hidden in ivy, whilst the back was nearly as much concealed by two magnificent yews, the tapering boughs of which would sweep the window panes. All over the queer gabled doors and windows trailed a vine, the grapes from which were famous throughout the country for their quality. Indeed, so good did the proprietor consider them, that in the season none other than these were put on the table; a circumstance not satisfactory to the mistress, whose taste was somewhat more refined, and who, with all her love for

the Major and "St. Helens," never could be brought to believe they were otherwise than sour, and inferior to foreign.

The garden was tastefully laid out, with evergreens and shrubberies; and the few acres around were well planted. The whole of this little property was washed by the beauteous Wye, which almost encircled the estate; this, with the magnificent scenery around, made many envious of the Major's possession; and to tell the truth the old gentleman frequently chuckled at the bargain he had made in becoming the owner of the St. Helens estate.

Soon after he had purchased the property, Major Villars found himself a father; my mother having presented him with what the nurse was pleased to term, "a poor sickly looking thing enough;" but as an interval of nearly ten years elapsed before the birth of another; the fond parents had sufficient time allowed them to devote their attention to the rearing of the first born, and to the curing of his ailments, of which he certainly had a plentiful supply; but as his years increased, so he grew stronger, and was at the time of my introduction to life, a strong healthy boy enough, with a temper none the better for having been always yielded to, and a disposition tyrannical and disagreeable.

My mother meant well, but was by nature somewhat indolent and never strong. This her eldest son was sharp enough to discover, and before I was

eight, and my sisters (of whom more anon) had reached respectively the years of six and seven, Henry had become so domineering as to have the whole house under his control; and led all, from master to man, a miserable time of it.

Jane was the name of the eldest, Ella the younger, both were pretty and good. The younger was, perhaps, rather my favourite, partly from her trusting much to me, and also from her finding no favour in the eyes of Henry; whereas Jane was more frequently honoured by his attentions, and would, as a return for such condescencion, try to excuse his disagreeableness.

My mother appeared to have exhausted her cares and anxieties in the first ten years of Henry's existence, as none of us younger ones came in for much notice. We were left a good deal to the care of the servants, who were, fortunately for us, good, and respectable, and well performed that duty which of all others should be to a mother the most sacred.

CHAPTER II.

On entering the breakfast room one morning soon after I had attained the age of nine, I was surprised to see my brother Henry dressed up in uniform; but to my inquiries, regarding the reason of those fine feathers, no reply was given—my brother, by his contemptuous look, giving me to understand that it was impertinence my asking; and my mother being too much absorbed in contemplating the handsome young man before her, to think of informing me. After a while my father entering, gave the desired information; from which I gathered that Henry had been gazetted as an ensign in the 100th Regiment of Foot; and that it had been determined upon to send me as a day scholar to a school in Chepstow, kept by a pedagogue named Lewis; of whose character I had learned enough from some of his scholars—my companions in rabbit shooting and bird's nesting—to greatly dread and mentally hope, that if ever I should be sent to school, it would not be to the one kept by Mr. Lewis at Chepstow.

However satisfactory it might have been to hear of the approaching departure of Henry, still my joy was much subdued by the visions of Lewis; as I felt an inward conviction that I should never please the man, always be punished, and yet get no redress from those at home; as my father retained many of his old army ideas, thinking that boys were all the better for thrashing, and that when well whipped in their infancy, they succeeded better in manhood. The treatment was such in his youth, why should it not answer for his son? In his younger days, the ability. and natural disposition of a child was quite a secondary consideration; the 'argumentum ad baculum,' was the best; and as it had turned out well in his instance, why should it fail now?

To attempt to offer any opposition to the arrangement was I knew useless; and so I listened in silence and found I was to walk from St. Helens to school every morning, being there by nine, returning in the afternoon at five.

This arrangement was easily fulfilled, as at home all were early risers—breakfast being over by eight, and the distance to school being barely two miles; however, I seldom was punctual and got punished accordingly.

On the day fixed for my going to school, I was taken there by my father; who, having some business to transact in the town, had ordered the carriage for the purpose, so the 'new boy' arrived somewhat

in state at 'The Scholastic Establishment,' as Mr. Lewis pompously termed the red brick, dingy-looking, green-blinded house; occupied by himself and pupils.

On our arrival we were ushered into a dark, dismal-looking apartment; scantily furnished, smelling strongly of bad spirits and worse cheese. It was so cold and uncomfortable in its appearance, as to forcibly remind me of the family dentist's operating room; and I felt the same creeping coldness come over me that I only knew when cruel fate, or a stern parent had determined that I was to part with a grinder. All that was wanting to complete the similitude was an uneasy chair, a case of instruments and a bason with a hole in the bottom of it.

After a few moments, passed by the Major in whistling, myself in cogitating, we were made aware of Mr. Lewis having entered by a harsh grating voice, saying, "good day." Then with a smile and rubbing his large raw knuckles, he bowed to my father and advanced towards myself. I met the cold, red fingers held out for me to shake, and felt I had passed under the dominion of Lewis. A few general matters were talked about between him and the Major; in the middle of which I was directed in oily tones, "to run to the school-room and there see my future companions."

I required no further telling, and following the dirty-faced maid that answered the bell, was imme-

diately among my 'future companions' and introduced to the head-master.

My companions were like all other boys, brought up at a school ruled in a similar manner to The Scholastic Establishment. That is, they were well conducted so long as under the master's eye; but when away from observation, they gave way to every evil passion; shewing how ill their training was, and how rotten the system of education that could appeal only to the fears. Lewis ruled by fear alone; for everything—want of knowledge, breaking bounds, stealing or lying, the whip was the remedy; so that a boy before telling him a lie, or committing an offence, merely considered the result of being found out; and having made up his mind to run the risk, stuck at nothing—and thus the boys of the Scholastic Establishment were not much approved of by the neighbourhood generally; but were considered decided nuisances, more particularly by those owning gardens or orchards; and were treated as such whenever one of them was unlucky enough to fall into the hands of these Philistines, who, taking the law into their own hands, seldom let them escape until they had "tanned the hide for 'em," as they termed thrashing a boy soundly.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Smith though termed head-master, was the only one. On him devolved every duty; and though by many of the boys considered in the light of a spy, yet have I known him conceal things from Lewis, risking consequences merely to save a boy from being severely flogged. His empty pockets, not his inclination, made him occupy the position he did with Lewis; for he was miserably poor, and taking advantage of this was by Lewis miserably paid.

His pittance kept him from starving, and through economy of the most grinding kind, allowed a few shillings over for one dependent on him. Poor fellow, he was once happier and had seen far better days; and many a tale have I heard tell, through the boys sleeping in the same room with him, of half finished sentences and familiar names; but his secret he gave to none. He wrapped himself up in his poverty, and remained with Lewis, struggling to do his duty. Often did the heightened colour and contracted hand shew how much he felt the

taunts and insults of the vulgar pedagogue, as whose usher he was forced to serve.

Recognising the boys whose acquaintance I had previously made, I went towards them, and was soon seated with them on the splintery, initial carved form, holding a half-hushed conversation; the subject being chiefly devoted to questions on their part, as to what Lewis had said to my father, and to congratulate me on having come in a carriage; for to quote the words of one of them, "Billy," *i.e.* Lewis, "will be so proud of getting a boy to come in a carriage, that he won't thrash you so much." This I hoped might be the case; and I felt a sort of inward satisfaction that fortune had determined on my riding instead of walking that morning.

My arrival had caused a general relaxation from severe study; or rather from the appearance of severe study. The absence of Billy, with the tired appearance of Mr. Smith, was a good excuse for each boy to put aside ink-stained copy books, and betake themselves to the more genial pursuits found in pea-shooter, and pop-gun. Suddenly all was hushed, and each young sinner looked the picture of studious attention and innocence. The cause I discovered to be the entry of Lewis, whose eye quickly glancing round the room failed not to discover a very fat boy, in a most happy state of unconsciousness as to the new arrival, in the very act of carving his initials on the desk before him. One terrified

look at his oppressor as Lewis strode towards him, and the next moment the fat boy was dragged from his seat and transferred across the desk upon which he had practised the carver's art. In this position he received about a dozen lashes with a riding whip, across that portion of the human form Divine, which is supposed to be least injured by, but most capable of undergoing so disagreeable an infliction. His roars for mercy and promises never again to do the like were not noticed, or did his symptoms of pain apparently affect the lookers on, who, no doubt, were too much accustomed to such sights, to give them more than common notice. On me it acted otherwise; and fear alone kept me from protesting against the cruelty that would inflict so severe a punishment, and leave its victim writhing in agony on the ground, for so slight an offence. With such a tyrant as this, I saw the inutility of trusting to the predictions of "our carriage," and resigned myself to being licked as much as any of the others.

After a dead silence of some minutes duration, broken only by the fat boy's sobs, Lewis coming up to me, demanded my name.

"Villars," I replied.

"I know that," answered he. "Your Christian name is what I want; and listen, young fellow, just say 'Sir' when you address me. Do you hear?" hissed out the man, scarlet with passion, and flourishing his whip across his legs.

So soon, thought I, has my turn come; but instead of the whip, I was agreeably surprised by his repeating the question, adding "Is it Tom, William, or what?"

"Philip, Sir," I answered most meekly.

"Humph," grunted he, and retired towards his den, as his desk was familiarly called, and from this position contented himself with glaring at his pupils until the time came for their dismissal.

CHAPTER IV.

Thus passed my first day at school, and the whole week went away in much the same manner; never a day passing without three or four heavy floggings, many tears, and frightful exhibitions of temper. Before ten days had passed from my introduction, I had been caned, and before three weeks, was as cunning and as vicious as any boy in the Scholastic Establishment.

Frequently on fine days, on leaving St. Helens, instead of going to school, I would play truant, and pass my days more pleasantly, and perhaps as profitably in the woods about Wind Cliff, or Tintern Abbey, or under some magnificent pine tree recline and watch the vessels down the British Channel far away into the distant sea. To any questions put me next day by Billy as to the cause of my absence, my invariable reply was, that my father had given me an holiday on account of the arrival of an uncle or an aunt, according as the thought first struck me, whether the relation should be male or female. Another never failing source of delight to me was

fishing; and having ascertained that in a small pond belonging to Lewis, there were a good number of eels kept for his own especial use, I resolved to share the spoil.

At the time of the discovery of these eels, I had no hooks nearer than home, but having noticed two complete lines, hanging up in Billy's den, I conceived they would answer my purpose perfectly well; so helping myself to them, placed the whole, properly baited, in the pond before leaving for home, intending to secure any eels next morning before school. However, next day I played truant, thus leaving any eels that might have been caught to wriggle on the hooks until the following day.

Next day I was rewarded with two large eels, who as is the usual custom of the tribe, wriggled themselves round the lines until there was no possibility of untwisting them, or extracting the hooks from their mouths. In this dilemma the school bell rang, and not wishing to be late, I placed the eels, lines, and all in my jacket pocket, buttoning the said jacket up to the throat, in the hopes of keeping the slimy creatures concealed, until I could find an opportunity of transferring them to my desk; but all these hopes were frustrated by the following events.

On entering the school-room, I was summoned by Billy to come to his den, in that short grating voice, which he always adopted preparatory to thrashing a

lad. On reaching that most disliked portion of the school-room, I was requested to give some reason for my absence from school on the previous day.

In reply, I stated "That, with my father, I had gone to see the Honourable Mr. Upton, who had an estate near."

"Oh, indeed!" ejaculated Billy, "you and your father must have been quick in going to Mr. Upton's, for I was over at St. Helens yesterday afternoon, and stayed some time with Major Villars."

"Yes, Sir," stammered I, "it—it—was after that."

"Indeed, are you sure?" asked Billy.

"Quite," answered I, feeling very hot and nervous.

"Then, Sir," hissed out Lewis, "I am quite sure you are telling me a lie, for I, after that, met your father in Chepstow; and then asked where you were, and we agreed that you should convict yourself of skulking out of school. Yes, Sir—you'll play truant will you? eh—"

"Sir," began I, "there was an aunt came, and so I got a hol—"

"Yes, Sir," jeered Lewis, "a holiday, no doubt. I thought your aunts and uncles were rather numerous, so took the trouble to inquire, and now I've caught you. So strip, strip—do you hear?" roared out the fellow.

"Oh, Sir," I began, but the order was repeated

more emphatically than ever, leaving me in no manner of doubt as to what my ultimate fate would be. But how to obey the order was what puzzled me; for if I stripped, taking off the jacket, then the eels were sure to escape, and the result would be a greater hiding than ever for stealing them, and if I did not, then to be half-murdered for disobedience. In this dilemma, I was again roared to "to strip," and began slowly to unbutton the bottom button of the jacket. This not being done quick enough, the tyrant sprung from his den, and placing his hand between my body and the buttoned jacket, tore the whole affair open, exposing to view the contents of the pocket; the eels having been displaced by such rough treatment fell on the floor, wriggling and writhing. For a moment, their contortions withdrew Billy's attention from myself, and he then observed, that the lines and hooks to which they were attached, were his own property. A moment's silence, and then a furious question, as to where I obtained the lines?

"From the desk," I replied.

"And the eels, whence are they?"

"If you please, Sir—" I began

"No lies," he interrupted. "They are mine also, out of my pond, eh? Then won't I give it you—come, off with your jacket, and you shall have a greater thrashing than ever you had in your life," thus saying, he went at me, and fully acted up to his

promise, for I was sore for a week afterwards, and savage with him for more, fully resolving in my own mind, to do every possible injury I could to him for the future.

At home I received no comfort, but rather the contrary; the idea of my being caught out and thrashed, appearing rather to afford a subject of amusement to my father than otherwise.

Two years passed thus. I learnt nothing, and was so frequently beaten as to care nothing for it, or to have a sense of shame or feeling in me; my best energies were devoted to annoying Lewis, and I own I was tolerably successful. Frequently he said aloud, "he wished my father would take me away;" but my repeating it at home never had the desired effect, for there I still remained, until at last, I was turned out, with a note to my father, intimating that for the future my attendance would be dispensed with at the Scholastic Establishment. Thus all this came to pass; and in acting as he did, Billy was perfectly justified, but I excuse myself in having been so bullied and ill-treated.

We were reading in class when a boy passed me some gunpowder, tightly twisted up in paper, recommending me at the same time to throw it into the fire and have a blow-up of old Billy, who was standing, as was his custom in front of the fire, with his coat tails drawn aside, hearing us read.

Without a moment's hesitation, the small packet

was tossed into the flame, and the next instant with a loud report the powder exploded, filling the room with soot, dust, cinders, and mortar. In this Billy was lost to view, and as I hoped, used up for ever; but ere long, the dreaded voice was heard demanding the offender, and out of the dust and confusion, emerged my horror, looking more frightful than ever, the smuts on his hands and face adding to his demoniacal expression.

"Who did it?" he roared. "Tell me, or I will beat every one of you till you do."

The threat was too much for the timid; and a small boy squeaked out—"Please, Sir, it was Villars."

There was no use in denying it, too many had seen me do it, moreover Billy was fully aware that none other but myself would dare the deed; and so I was dreadfully beaten, so severe indeed as to seriously injure my health for a long time afterwards, and turned out with a note addressed to my father, requesting he would not send me there for the future.

The wording of the note evidently annoyed the old gentleman a good deal, as on perusing it, he swore pretty strongly at Lewis; which hearing, I thought it a good opportunity to mention how cruelly I had been beaten, but on being told, "That had not Lewis beaten me, he would, and that Lewis had behaved very well." I retreated to my bed-

room, being too ill to keep up longer. Here I remained for many days; inflammation and fever setting in during the night.

My being really ill had the effect of raising the anger of the Major against Lewis, so that the bill (in which the damaged mantle-piece was charged pretty highly for) was paid by a personal visit; and there before all the boys, the pedagogue was told that the punishment exceeded the offence, and that his conduct towards me and his other pupils, was that of a petty tyrant and low scoundrel—adding, as he doubled his fist under the nose of the astonished listener, "Were I not a magistrate, I would give you a sound cuffing, you dirty coward," thus saying, the irate Major left the Scholastic Establishment, and walked home.

CHAPTER V.

I REMAINED at home nearly three months doing nothing, but waiting until a school at Chester should reopen after the Christmas holidays, to which school I was now to be sent. This interval was passed by me in rabbit shooting and being bullied by my brother, who was as usual, home on leave.

Since Henry's entering the army, it appeared to me that he did little else than obtain leave of absence, swear, and smoke.

His coming home was to us all a source of annoyance, to myself particularly so; for I was forced to be his slave, and make my pleasures subservient to his. Complaining to the parents was useless, as they would listen to nothing against him, and my mother was so wrapped up in her first-born as to believe him almost perfect; foolish affection made her look upon his vices as but trivial faults, and such as were possessed in common by every young man of spirit in the army. This might have been excusable in her, as her knowledge of that profession extended but little beyond the light talk of officers in the ball-

room, or scraps of military histories culled from fashionable novels; but my father should have known better, having been himself in the army, and there long enough to know, that cursing, gambling, and foolish talk are the exception, not the rule.

More than once, lately, I had noticed my father to be less cheerful than formerly, and a shade to come across his brow, more particularly when Henry came home. For the causes, I had tried in vain to discover, attributing them to my conduct at school, gout, age; indeed, everything and anything but the right cause, which, at length, I discovered to be in my brother, by the following conversation which took place after dinner between that interesting individual and his parent.

"Well, governor," abruptly asked Henry, "do you mean to pay that two hundred and fifty, or not, as time is up and it must be paid?"

In reply, my father stated, "That without injury to his younger children he could not afford to pay the debts so often; that this was now the third time he had done so since he was gazetted, and twice within the past six months; that the allowance he made him, of two hundred a year, was amply sufficient to give him every comfort, and, probably, much more than many other officers received beyond their pay; moreover, as a father, he was not justified in paying such debts, thereby encouraging him in gam-

bling, and trying to live up to men whose means were infinitely more than his own."

"Very well," coolly answered my brother. "You observe I would not interrupt you throughout all that long tirade, but let you have your say. Now listen to me; if you do not let me have the money I must sell, that's all."

His threat of selling appeared to have the desired effect, as, soon after the money was given, on the understanding that he was not to gamble, or owe money for the future.

The Christmas holidays over, I found myself, one bitter cold morning, on the outside of the Beaufort Mail, on my road to Chester.

The extreme cold was a sufficient reason for the paucity of passengers, there being, indeed, none outside; the coachman and guard being my sole companions. These I treated liberally to drink at some of the inns on the road, thinking that in doing so, I was receiving a high privilege, and building up a small fame for myself as some one beyond common. The time until we reached Shrewsbury was passed pleasantly enough with my coachman companion, whose anecdotes, though entirely connected with himself and horses, were new to me, and as such, gave satisfaction. The guard was less pleasant, having taken too many glasses of brandy and water, which had the effect of making him contradictory and pugnacious.

At Shrewsbury we stopped to dinner, and picked up some passengers; among others, two boys returning to school at Chester, which, in the course of conversation with them, I discovered to be the same to which I was going. An immediate friendship ensued, and ere the coach stopped at the school conducted by the Reverend J. Cunningham, we had talked over all our past lives, and I had eaten so much toffee, the parting gift of my mother's lady's-maid, as to feel very sick and uncomfortable.

My reception by the Principal was most kind, and finding that an acquaintance had been formed with the two boys picked up at Shrewsbury, I was permitted to occupy the same room as they did. Tea was soon after ready, everything at that meal being good and clean; but as I was cold and sick, brandy and water hot was my portion. The meal ended and the cloth removed, then all assembled, boys, servants, and the family, for a prayer before parting; and thus concluded the introduction of myself to the new school.

Years have rolled by since this time, yet the kind way in which I was received, with the daily increasing kindness shown from the first entrance until the day of leaving, have caused almost every event to be still vivid in my memory. Mr. Cunningham was so entirely different from anything I had expected, or had previously heard of. His gentle, yet determined manner, contrasted strongly against the over-

bearing and tyrannical method of teaching pursued by Lewis. Mr. Cunningham seldom resorted to corporal punishment, but when such was determined on, it was severe, and the receiver generally felt he had deserved fully as much as he received.

I now resolved to work hard, and, as a result, received prizes, two of which, to my father's great joy, I took home with me on the occurrence of the midsummer vacation. But my old propensities for fishing, stealing fruit, and breaking bounds, were "contra bonos mores," and as such, effectually prevented my getting ever a prize for "Good Conduct."

School-boy days were passed as most school-boys get through such things; but, perhaps, on my part, more pleasantly than is usual, and on attaining my seventeenth year, they were concluded by my being withdrawn, and told that certain arrangements had been made for my future welfare, to which I was expected to consent.

CHAPTER VI.

I WAS surprised by my father informing me, that he had been successful, through the interest of Colonel Davis, in obtaining a cadetship for me, and hoped "I was satisfied with the exertions he had made in finding some provision for my future welfare."

Now, much as I valued the kindness of the good old man, yet I could not help shewing, both in my voice and manner, how much disappointed I was in the profession chosen. In the first place, I had no anxiety to go to India, in which country I knew nobody; and, in the next place, preferred being in Her Majesty's service, where promotion could be purchased, and where utter expatriation was not a *sine qua non* to a pension. As to money; I had always understood that the governor was well off, and could allow me as much, or, at any rate, nearly as much, as he did to Henry, whose company had been purchased at a large sum above the regulation but a few days back.

All this and more I told the old man, adding that

"if not allowed to enter the Queen's army, then I would study for one of the learned professions." But each proposition of mine received a decided negative, until, at length, tired with my objections, my father answered that, "However anxious he might be to forward my wishes, yet he had not the means, and that after paying the allowance to Henry, house expenses, &c., &c., there was nothing over. That now the expenses would be greater, as masters must be engaged for my sisters; and that if I did not take this, there was nothing else for me; moreover, he added, my object in getting you into the Company's service, is to enable you to live on your pay, which, I am assured, is amply sufficient for every want, and will even provide you with luxuries."

How often in after years did I think over this speech, when far away and unable, from absolute poverty, to allow myself comforts much more luxuries. The pay so much talked about, I found barely sufficient in many stations to cover expenses. Indeed, in some of the larger and more expensive cantonments, I found it impossible to make all ends meet; for, however economical a man may be, he will find that court martial duty, (which entails buggy hire), step purchasing, and station duty, will cause his monthly stipend to reach to about two thirds of his monthly expenses.

However, to return to the story, no argument that I could adduce, served to alter my father's

determination; or could I make him see how unfairly he was behaving, by giving so large an income to one son, and none to the other. His reply was, "That Henry was not only in the Queen's service, but in an expensive regiment; and that this allowance had been promised to him long ago, and before there was even a thought of providing for younger children."

Thus was I to go to an unhealthy climate, thousands of miles away from all one holds dear; to a country where luxuries are necessaries, and to live on my pay, simply to prevent the first born being deprived of the means of gratifying any one of his expensive tastes. The whole thing was plain enough. In assisting me, the eldest and favourite son would be a sufferer; and in sending me to such a distance, my wants would only reach them by letter, whilst those of the brother could be disagreeably forced on their attention by a visit in person, or by a series of coaxing and threats, all of which plans had been resorted to with unvaried success, ever since he had entered the army.

I was given the night to think over it, and knowing there was not the slightest probability of any change coming over my father's mind, resolved to change mine; so ere my eyes closed in sleep, had fully determined on accepting the appointment; trusting to luck, and a kind-hearted parent for any future advantage. Next day it was arranged that I

was to go to town and there live with a private tutor for six months—studying fortification, drawing, and Hindostani; a knowledge of which language, to use the oft told lie, "was sure to lead to an appointment." There was also some mention of my being young and thoughtless, (this latter word meant soft); and being such, I was recommended to be careful and shun vice.

Before my six months in London expired, I certainly was no longer thoughtless, or rather soft, as having been left a good deal to myself and not ill provided with money, I learnt something of life, but little of anything else. Oriental literature was not much attended to; indeed the knowledge of it never progressed beyond the alphabet, which point I attained before the first week of study had passed. Quickly the time slipped away. The professor pocketted his guineas, and the tutor his salary; both informing me, that when older I might be more inclined for study, and, perhaps, be some day a distinguished officer. The professor adding, that "I was to bear in memory that until I passed, no appointment could be given to me; but doing so, was a certain step to advancement."

Of course this I found, as every man has done—who without interest, has trusted to P. or P.C. being placed after his name.

The few months that I remained at home after this, were devoted to farewells and preparing outfits.

Greater part of which was made at home; (a thing by the bye I was thankful for afterwards, as they proved much better articles in every way than those provided by outfitters for my brother cadets). Henry obtaining a short leave of absence, came over to say good bye; but his manner, which to me had been formerly reserved and overbearing, now appeared contemptuous; indeed, he seldom addressed me except to sneer at the service I had chosen; and altogether made himself so disagreeable by his sneers and personal remarks, as to render the few remaining days spent at home anything but pleasant. Just the day before I left, his leave expired; and as he was mounting his dog cart, I shook him warmly by the hand, saying "good bye."

"Good bye," he coldly replied; "good bye. I regret the position you will now occupy."

"Why—how do you mean? What position?" I angrily asked.

"Only," he sneered, "that of a Company's officer. We don't think much of them."

This annoyed me; so I told him in no measured terms, that "such was not the general opinion, but that of petty minds, and paltry dispositions, such as were possessed by himself and companions. That in point of birth, the officers in the Company's service were, on an average, as good as their brethren in the Queen's; and that they were certainly not behind them in gallantry, education, or in those essentials

which constitute the gentleman. As to their position in society, that was the same, (giving as instances two Indians of our acquaintance); and that our only being allowed rank by courtesy in England, arose from a petty feeling of jealousy, much akin to that now displayed by himself."

"You seem well up in your part," sneered my brother.

"I am," I replied. "Colonel Davis has often spoken on the subject to me, and often has he regretted that the jealousy of the Horse Guards could allow any whipper-snapper of a boy, who, perhaps, for the first time in his life puts on uniform, to dispute his right to army rank, and in reality be only plain Mr. Davis, although he has lost an arm in fighting for her Majesty at Bhurtpore. Please heaven," I added as he drove away, "this state of things may not go on for ever; good bye."

A restless night was passed by myself, and I expect by all at home, as we were to part on the morrow, which broke at last, the rain pouring in torrents. "Fit day," I thought, "to take leave. In good keeping with the sobbing hearts in doors."

This was done at last; though not without many tears on all sides. My sisters clinging round me even to the carriage door, which was to convey me to the station. Then came the farce of passing at the India House; (I am speaking of twelve years ago, when a man frequently signed his name, hearing

that of his director spoken in a reverent whisper by the officiating clerk; then the cadet had to form one of two dozen, all of whom were expected to stand at a table, hold a bible, and kiss it at the same time; the performance winding up with his receiving a bit of dirty parchment, a bit of advice, and permission to lay out capital in three great Hindostani books, weighing about half a hundred weight; as these "would be the means of enabling you to pass and obtain that *certain appointment.*"

How often afterwards did I wish those books at the bottom of the sea; more particularly in paying for extra weight in crossing the Desert. However, I must not abuse them, for they were admirable works and were useful at last.

CHAPTER VII.

My passage to Calcutta was taken in the "Hooghly," one of those splendid vessels belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental Company; and thus in the month of September 1845, I found myself one of a party of one hundred and fifty persons, on board that vessel, being carried rapidly under steam and sail towards the dreaded Bay of Biscay. The bay was of course rough, and as my experience of the sea was confined to the Bristol Channel near Chepstow, my sensations can be easier imagined than described; suffice it to say, I was frightfully sick. The only comfort I could find under the circumstance being, that most of the others were so too—the exceptions were a few strong-looking old hands, who, walking about with their hands in their coat pockets, made a point of informing everybody that was sick, "that they never were so," which was true enough, for they eat more dinner, drank more brandy and water, and smoked more cigars; declaring they "felt quite jolly," and that the sea gave them a "wonderful appetite."

It was decidedly hot and stuffy down below, the cabins being very small and very dark, with a peculiar smell, in which it was difficult to decide whether cockroach or stale cheese preponderated.

In each cabin were fixed four berths, and in each of these was seen a haggard-looking object, sick, very sick. Everything must have an end, even sea sickness; so before we reached Gibraltar, all were well enough to appear at table, and the lady passengers willing to receive, and capable of appreciating any attentions or civilities shewn by the rougher sex.

Of ladies, we had rather a goodly number, of all sorts, ages, and sizes, from slim and bashful sixteen, to her whose charms had set for ever. Many were very agreeable and nice looking; but the two, who for pleasing manners and beauty, were considered by all as the belles, were so closely guarded by a yellow-faced old duenna, in the shape of an aunt, as to prevent the possibility of a cadet getting more than a side long view, much more a flirtation with either of them. Their being so guarded was a fund of amusement to us all, and none enjoyed vexing the old aunt more than her nieces; who laughingly told us, making faces at the same time at the old duenna, whose attention was for a moment withdrawn, that they were thus guarded to prevent their falling in love with a cadet or wretched subaltern, but their affections were to be fixed on

nothing under a hookah-smoking judge, or a toothless general.

Many of the other young girls were watched pretty closely by their various mammas and chaperons, still we cadets managed to have small flirtations; and before the voyage was ended some of us felt that our hearts were no longer our own. As to proposing there was none of it; for the idea of a cadet marrying was too preposterous for such a merry set as were there, and the remaining gentlemen were chiefly married men, or determined old bachelors—neither of whom could be caught.

Indeed, the only unmarried men, were a major and a captain, both disagreeable and decidedly plain. The first did little else than dictate, growl, and grumble; whilst the second "preferred his cigar to all the girls in Christendom," as he politely informed a fond mother, who asked his opinion regarding the personal attractions of "those two girls, whom they are pleased to call belles."

These two males being of such decidedly objectionable materials, were left by all the mothers and chaperons entirely to themselves, so the one growled on, and the other smoked on, without notice or interruption.

The stay at Gibraltar was short; sufficient for us to enjoy the delicious muscatel grape and to get smothered in coal dust; then on, skirting the Spanish coast, close enough to see each passing scene on

shore, many of which called Gil Blas to mind. Here could be seen a group of peasants dressed in the picturesque costume of the country, lazily lounging under large shady trees—whilst further on might be seen the priest mounted on a mule, toiling up the steep mountain path, his dark features nearly hidden under the large brimmed hat. Thus passed the day; one seemed never weary of being on deck, and watching the shores and islands on this beautiful sea; all appeared an intense, beautiful blue, from sea to sky, and the air fresh and invigorating. It was, indeed, lovely, and all enjoyed the scene; even the grumbling major owned, with a half-suppressed growl, "that it wasn't so bad."

Hot, white-looking Malta was reached, and as we had learnt experience at Gibraltar, few remained on board during the operation of coaling—of course all to be seen, from the church to the harbour, was seen; but the great source of amusement was watching some sickly, yellow-looking people, placed singly or together in boats, and then pulled about by men in others. At first we took them for convicts, but on being enlightened, discovered they were passengers by the "Mussouree," just in from Alexandria; and being suspected of bringing plague, were thus treated by their own government.

It appeared to me as very ridiculous to subject men to such absurdities and annoyances, when a

clean bill of health is required before they can leave the ship. Indeed, to such an extent was it carried, as to cause any person touched by an Alexandrian, to be shut up for some days in the Lazaretto, and there kept at the expense of the toucher. This same Lazaretto, is not the place, in my opinion, likely to cleanse one; for when I saw it, the look was sufficiently dirty to breed any amount of plagues of itself, without sending all the way to Egypt for them.

Sufficient mittens being purchased to send to friends at home, and coaling over, once more we were ploughing the waves towards our destination; an addition to our party being made by the arrival on board of two or three foreigners, with very dirty linen and a good deal of hair about their faces. They were entering the service of the Pacha; which service by the bye, appears a kind of haven for all the destitute foreigners in existence.

Notwithstanding every precaution, the coal dust had managed to find its way into all the cabins, greatly to the annoyance of everybody; but to none more so, than to the belles' aunt, or to call her by her name, Mrs. Dalby, whose ire was greatly kindled on perceiving the frightful mess the bedding and furniture, was in. However, instead of resorting to the same means as adopted by others, Mrs. Dalby determined on complaining to the captain, requesting, at the same time, that he would get the coal dust

removed. This the skipper, with a smile, promised to do, so soon as the vessel should be further out to sea.

This amiability on the part of Captain Scobell so pleased the old lady, that she was induced to ask Captain Scobell if he would oblige her by speaking a few words to some of the young gentlemen, whose conduct both to herself and nieces was not such as she approved of.

"What do you complain of, Mrs. Dalby?"

"Impertinence, Sir; several of the cadets laugh at me, and are too fond of paying attention to my nieces."

"Perhaps," replied the Captain, "the Miss Maltravers may not agree with you; but I advise you to speak to them yourself, and there is no doubt you will obtain your wishes."

"Sir," she answered, and swept majestically across the deck.

This conversation had been overheard by almost all the passengers, and was the source of amusement to many; the only ones who appeared ignorant of its occurrence, being the Miss Maltravers, who were sitting on deck, surrounded by the usual number of young men, their attention divided, between listening to the soft strains of "Love Not," as played by the steamer's band, and the soft nothings whispered by those around. Suddenly this harmony was interrupted by the harsh tones of Mrs. Dalby's voice,

calling her eldest niece, Annie, to come down below. This order not being obeyed on the instant, led to an outbreak of temper on Mrs. Dalby's part, which, though amusing to lookers on, was very painful to the girl addressed.

"Annie—Annie," repeated Mrs. Dalby, "come here you minx; don't you hear me calling? come here this instant, and do not let me see you any more flirting with those boys."

This last word said in a most contemptuous manner, and with a withering look, evidently intended for the special benefit of the cadets. Thus saying, Mrs. Dalby disappeared in the regions below, followed by her blushing niece, whose beauty was heightened by the increased colour, as her cheek glowed partly with anger, but mostly with shame, at the vulgarity of her aunt, and the exhibition of it before so many people.

After all, it turned out that Annie had not been flirting or even addressing a cadet, but was answering a question put to her by the cigar-smoking Captain, who, seeing he was the innocent cause of all this fuss, endeavoured to say something in the poor girl's defence; but was perfectly inaudible, in the storm of words, delivered by Mrs. Dalby. So walking forward, lit another cigar, resolving for the future to have nothing to say to woman on any pretence whatever, and being more confirmed in his dislike, of what he termed "the pests," than ever.

Each day brought forth some scene, and what between these, a little music, a little dancing and a good deal of flirting, the time passed so quickly and pleasantly—that we found ourselves within sight of the tall minarets of Alexandria, when it seemed as if it had been but the day before we left Malta. A shake of the hand to all the officers, and we bid adieu to the good steamer "Hooghly."

CHAPTER VIII.

I SHALL not stop to describe Alexandria. No one who has ever been there is likely to forget its dirt and discomforts. Of course, all that was to be seen was viewed in that hurried superficial manner, in which sights are generally observed by travellers, whose time is not at their own disposal. The things which received most admiration, were the donkeys, whose dispositions appeared very different from that of their European brethren, they being good-tempered and good goers; having no peculiar fancies for turning sharp turns that lead homewards, or for balancing themselves on their fore feet, keeping the head down and heels up. Many were as weak as willing, which proved to be the case with the one I bestrode, who deposited himself and burden in the sand and dirt. This added to the great amount of coal dust ground into me on board, rendered something more than common washing necessary.

For this purpose, accompanied by the grumbling Major (who had lately become quite affectionate towards me) I ventured to the native baths, (Hum-

mums) and ere long, was undergoing all manner of tortures, such as neck twistings, back crackings, &c., &c., supposed by the inhabitants of those parts to be beneficial to the system. These baths were made very hot, and after stewing for some time in one of them, I was supposed to be ready to be operated upon; on which, a native speaking some unintelligible language, proceeded to rub me down with hair brushes, hard enough to bring the skin off, and then by way of finishing polish, mounting on my shoulders, slid all the way down to my heels, holding on tight by his knees during this very unpleasant performance. This feat he essayed a second time, but with a push and a shake, I was quit of my old man of the sea, half-angry and yet half-amused, with some doubt in my mind as to whether this was the custom of the country, or whether it might arise from extreme dirt, that being like many other extremes, requiring strong measures for reduction.

My attention was suddenly taken from myself to the Major, whose voice, in no sweet tones, was heard from the next room. It was evident he was undergoing the same treatment as I had experienced; and not being of a very amiable temperament, was giving way to his sorrows in a series of curses, in English and Hindostani, more expressive than poetical.

"I'll be d—d if you go grinding down my back again with these cursedly pointed knees of yours, so just keep off."

"But, Master, it ver goot, Master get—"

"Now, keep off," interrupted the Major. "Why you wretched skinny devil, you don't think I am going to let you sharpen your shin bones at my expense, do you?"

"Holloa, Major!" exclaimed I, "what are they after with you?"

"After," replied the irate Major. "Why here is a fellow as thin as a whipping post, and looks as if he had been fed upon herring bones all his life, not contented with washing half a pound of dirt off me, and where it all came from Heaven knows! but the fellow must needs scramble atop of my shoulders, and let himself down, holding on like grim death, to my ribs, with the d—st pair of pointed knees I ever saw."

"That," I answered, "has just been undergone by myself, and suppose every one has the same done to them at these baths."

"Well, they may," growled out the Major, "but I wont; let's dress sharp and get out of this stew-pan. What a fool I was to come; got to pay two rupees, I suppose, for having a nigger run over one; pleasant!" And thus he continued to lament and grumble over his treatment, until his mouth was stopped by finding tiffin ready when we returned to the hotel.

After tiffin, all went on board that horror of horrors, the Nile boat, and soon afterwards we found

ourselves steaming away up the Mahmoudeh Canal, thence into the Nile, and so on to Cairo. Oh, the misery of that Nile boat, one hundred and fifty of us stuffed in her, sleeping all heads and tails, like herrings in a barrel. And then the fleas, how they appeared to relish real English flesh and blood!

The usual amount of sight-seeing was performed, some riding to the Pyramids, and others to the Fort and Mosque, which latter building, is, in my humble opinion, not to be compared to many of the buildings at Agra or Delhi. Indeed, in it, the real is so mixed up with the sham, as to cause one to imagine the whole to be a grand imposition; whereas in those splendid monuments of our predecessors in India there is no sham, all is real, substantial and good. This place revels, like most oriental cities, in a considerable amount of dirt, flies, and children; and glad were we when the carriages were announced as ready, to take the first party across the Desert. My van had in it the full complement, viz: six persons, who were, besides myself, three cadets, the smoking Captain, and grumbling Major. This last gentleman had really become painfully civil to me ever since the washing affair. How the party came to be made up thus, I do not remember, as the Major and Captain were to the tastes of none; however, away we all jolted, getting over the first stage most amicably, the dust flying, and the Captain smoking.

As we proceeded more into the Desert, the dust increased, which added to the smoke emitted by the Captain, became a great nuisance, and tended very considerably to raise the ire of the Major, whose curses at the dust, smoke and road, had for some miles past been more deep than loud. At length breaking from the sotto voce, he exclaimed, that "Smoking was a beastly habit and ought not to be allowed," then came a pause, but no effect, as the Captain smoked on; seeing this, the Major leaning forward, requested "Captain Nash would set a better example, and throw that beastly thing out of his mouth."

"What?" asked the astonished Captain, who though usually a man of few words, now gave vent to his injured feelings in quite a long speech for him. "What! throw away my baccy?—what! for you? What the devil do you mean by calling my baccy beastly? I'll tell you what, old growl-hard! 'tis a precious deal better baccy than ever you smoked, or are likely to smoke. Chuck away my cheroot, eh! beastly cigar, don't you wish you may get it?"

"But I insist and order."

"Order be d—d. I won't," replied the Captain.

"I'll report you, Sir! by Heavens, Sir, charges shall be sent in against you directly we get to India!"

"Send away old fellow; what's the first charge to be? For having smoked baccy—eh? What the

devil brought you here if you can't stand smoke? Nobody want's you I'm sure," replied Captain Nash.

"I came because I chose," replied the Major, and getting angry, he added, "if you don't take that cheroot out of your mouth, I will."

"Well," smiled the Captain, "just try it; and if I don't give you something to grumble for, my name is —— Stiggins!"

To us cadets this row was intense fun; we, fully making up our minds to the journey being ended with a duel, or at least seeing the two come to blows. But our hopes were frustrated by the Major's correcting his speech, and saying "I mean, Captain Nash, that I will find means to prevent your smoking, and encouraging the young men to do so also, by your example."

"It's a pity you can't say what you mean then," smoked out the Captain. Then turning himself back in his seat, lapsed into silence.

The Major's means we found to consist in mentioning the circumstance to a negro, who appeared to be sole servant and manager of one of the resting houses, but without receiving any redress however. Before we again started, all was amicably arranged, by the Major's exchanging with a fiery-headed griff into another van. This youngster seemed to suffer from hydrophobia, or some similar disease, as to those gifted with the slightest powers of smelling, his

dislike to water was disagreeably apparent. Under these circumstances, we found the prevalence of tobacco rather advantageous than otherwise, and it relieved us of the knowledge of his presence, excepting by sight.

Suez was reached and done in a very short time, and glad were all when the last batch of travellers arriving, signal was made from the steamer "Governor" that she was ready for sea.

The first thought that presented itself to all of us on going on board, was the smallness of the vessel; so that if in the "Hooghly" it was a tight fit, then here it must be a frightful squeeze. On proceeding to our berths, we found our surmise to be only too true; likewise the heat intense, and the ventilation of the very worst description. The more one looked at the accommodation, the less inviting it appeared; and vent was given to the feelings in language more personal than polite, to the directors of the Company.

It was indeed a shame, that with such high prices charged, no better vessel should have been provided for the voyage down the Red Sea and to Calcutta. Some attributed it to the carelessness of those at home, as to India and Indians generally; others to the independence of the Company regarding complaints not made in English newspapers; but most agreed in the opinion given by the smoking Captain, who declared it was all owing to their

motto, "Quis separabit," which he translated as "There's no opposition."

"Well, this is a go!" exclaimed young Warner. "If we aint as like herrings in a pickle jar as anything I ever saw; all jammed, heads, tails, and yet no how in particular. There are two fellows' berths stuck over mine, which gives the top fellow a fine, but rather close view of the spiders and cobwebs on the roof, while mine is close enough to the deck to allow all the filth and rubbish of the cabin to be swept under it, without its being found out by any, except the cockroaches; the which gentlemen, I have the pleasure to inform you all, are numerous, and of a size unknown in other ships—they also appear of a tame and familiar nature."

"Ugh, isn't it hot?" said another. "If India is anything like this, my goose is cooked that's certain. My eye! look at those cockroaches all going out for a walk," and he pointed with his finger to a host of those animals running across the deck.

"Steward, steward," called out half a dozen voices.

"Coming, gents," answers that ubiquitous individual.

"I say, steward," asks one pointing to the cockroaches; "is this the style of things in this ship? and are Christians supposed to sleep in these kennels?"

"Why not," answers the man; "there's room

enough, and as for them cocks we don't mind 'em."

"Oh you don't, but we do," replies a cadet, "and those berths are awfully hot."

"Yes," answered the steward; "they is 'ot to be sure; but all the ladies and gents sleeps on deck."

"What?" asked a curly-headed youngster, "Altogether?"

"Oh no, Sir. The ladies goes to the starn, and then a sort of curtain is drawn across, betwixt you both, just to keep you gents off, and makes it precious 'ot for you all too."

"Jolly," answered curly; "smothered above and below, not even allowed a squint at old Aunty Dalby. I say, steward, if a fellow goes t'other side of this curtain, what then?"

"Why," laconically replied the steward, "if the Captains catches a gent, he'll like as not give 'un a good idin."

This answer stopped further questioning, and on going on deck, we saw that Captain Hornblow was big enough and strong enough to do what the steward said might be expected from him.

The old vessel rolled, pitched, groaned, and took in water whenever there was a possibility of her doing so. The heat was intense, and the curtain drawn across the deck as described by the steward, at sleeping time. Only one or two ladies ventured up; the idea of sleeping near so many gentlemen

supposed to be undressed, (which was not the case, all having pijamas or sleeping drawers on), being too much for their modesty. Indeed, Mrs. Dalby declared, that both her nieces and herself would perish before they submitted to such indecency; however, the heat below soon made the young ladies object to this arrangement, and they with others, ere long, ventured up. Before we arrived at Aden, all had left the cabins below, excepting Mrs. Dalby, who true to her determination, remained there, becoming in one week quite a shadow of herself, and a martyr to principle. For my part, I never before or since have felt anything like that heat; how Pharoah with his hosts managed to grind about that country is wonderful. The drowning in the Red Sea must have been almost refreshing, after the heat and dust of marching there. How all grumbled; the Major more than ever, who reproved me mildly, by stating in reply to my question as to "whether it was as hot as this in India?"

"Like this," he growled; "no, nor anywhere else that I know of; besides in India, one does not live in a kennel, with a chance of being drowned, or devoured by cockroaches."

Aden was certainly a small improvement on the Red Sea, but there is something frightfully inhospitable looking in the bare, bold scenery about; nothing green, all rock. The place itself appearing to be built on the site of an extinct volcano;

scattered here and there are a few houses, built of bamboos and matting, looking cool but comfortless. The garrison looked sickly; but what struck me most was the miserable wan appearance of the few ladies and children as they drove out along the hot beach, endeavouring to reanimate themselves with the cool evening sea breeze. Some children were gathered round the church-yard trying to spell out the inscriptions on the monuments. Poor children, thought I, your pale faces and wasted forms say that ere long others will be doing over your graves what you are now doing over those now silent, but who once breathed and were even happy in this dreadful place, this frightful cinder.

A swim in the sea, and once again on board under full speed for Madras.

CHAPTER IX.

THE voyage thither was barren of incident. The Major, as usual, growled. Captain Nash and the cadets smoked and kept up a grumble at the accommodation, whilst the ladies were busy in copying music, doing everlasting crochet work, and mending queer-looking articles, which were hastily concealed from view, or apologised for with a facetious observation. The weather was cool enough to render sitting on deck under the awning agreeable. This, with an impromptu polka or waltz, occasioned by the strains of the ship's band, rendered life just bearable.

Many a hearty laugh we had at the clumsy efforts of those, who now, for the first time in their lives, essayed a waltz or polka, and listened to the numerous apologies offered for trodden-on toes, loss of step, &c., &c. However, thanks to the patience of the fair teachers, and the abilities of the pupils, most were capable of dancing, more or less tolerably, before arriving at Ceylon.

How beautiful appeared this island. So green, so picturesque, more particularly with the desolate

dreariness of Aden, still fresh in our memories. The bright green sea casting itself with a roar on the rocky shore, covering the cocoa-nut trees with sheets of foam. The harbour with some ships and steamers at anchor, each pulling at its cable with a giant's tug, as the heaving billows lifted them upwards. Scattered over the sea were native boats of a graceful and peculiar construction, their large latteen sails shining white, as they caught the rays of the tropical sun.

Here we first had an idea of India and Indian life. The native shops, native soldiery, and a foreign language. Fruits, the very names of which we had never before heard, with wonderful specimens of workmanship in ivory, silver, sandal wood, &c., &c. Then punkas, palanquins, and hosts of sleek, effeminate natives.

The cinnamon groves, Wulk Welly, and every sight was seen; indeed, all enjoyed themselves, and were sorry when it was necessary to return on board our cockroach haunted vessel, as the gun had fired preparatory to her starting off for Madras. The two passengers parted with at the island, had their places filled by an elderly gentleman and a pretty young widow, both destined for Calcutta. The gentleman was one of those fortunate individuals on whom the gods love to shower blessings—he being rich, healthy, and in the Bengal Civil Service; but whether the widow was to be considered fortunate, or otherwise,

I leave to better judges, she having no fortune but a pretty face, and had buried her husband some nine months before in Ceylon, to which place he had gone, a poor subaltern, in search of wealth.

The deck sleeping had been continued by almost all the gentlemen from the time of leaving Suez, but a squall coming on, had forced us to seek shelter below—some to their berths, and others to the couches in the after-part of the saloon, there to remain half stifled till morning.

Sleep had just visited my heated frame, when the noise of voices, in high dispute, from the lady's cabin, awoke not only myself, but all within hearing. The Ceylon widow was heard in no very gentle accents, insisting on having the skuttle open, as, to use her own expression, she "was being smother ed."

This her companion strongly objected to, as she was liable to cold, and the wet would come in. "You must," and "I won't," were continued for some time, until at length, by the sound, it seemed as if the widow, taking the law into her own hands, had forced the scuttle open, in defiance of the remonstrances of the other.

"Oh dear," said one, which by the voice we knew to be a Mrs. Elliott, an elderly lady in the dressmaker line, the which, by the bye, was of course known to nobody. "Oh dear, I shall catch my death of cold! Oh, captain!"

"Stuff and nonsense," replied the other, "I'm not going to be smothered for your colds!"

"You're no lady, I'm sure," said Mrs. E——.

"Yes I am," answered the widow. "More so than some people, perhaps."

"I wish," weeped forth Mrs. Elliott, "my husband was here, and he'd tell you."

"I should like to see him say anything to me, you nasty old thing!" replied the widow.

This last sentence, in which she was called a "nasty old thing," was too much for Mrs. Elliott, whose sensitive nature felt the unfairness of being called old, before she was even two score years and ten. Her choked utterance and sobs told that she had resorted to the usual remedy of her sex, and dissolved into tears. "I'll tell the Cap—Captain, and c—call the stewardess," she sobbed out; and then, opening her cabin door, she began most lustily to call the latter individual; but with no effect—the stewardess being all the time snoring comfortably in her little hole near the pantry.

Among others disturbed by the row was the grumbling Major, who, after muttering to himself for a long time about "the infernal row women make," called out to Mrs. Elliott, in no very amiable voice, that if she would not sleep herself, would she let others do so.

"But, Major," meekly replied Mrs. Elliott, "I want the stewardess; the new lady has been insult-

ing me, and wants the what-do-you-call-it thing open."

"What's that?" asked the Major; "do you mean the scuttle?"

"Yes, that is the name."

"Then let her have it, and don't wake up the whole ship for such rubbish," said the Major.

"But my cold," pleaded the old lady.

"Your cold be—" but the end of the sentence was lost in the banging of the cabin door, as the "ugly old thing," evidently displeased with the reply, shut to the door, and returned to her cabin.

On arrival at Madras, Mrs. Elliott with several others left the ship, their portion of the journey being ended. The parting with some was the cause of sorrow to all. The month spent together had been pleasant, and long enough to allow each to discover something amiable in his neighbour. What at first appeared great faults and disagreeable manner, had, by the end of the voyage, become only a peculiarity, and, as such, made allowances for. Few, indeed, were they who bid adieu to the Madras passengers without a feeling of regret. It was sad to think that of these how few one would meet again, and how very few would, probably, be spared to return to Fatherland.

After the usual time spent by most new comers in observing jugglers (whose feats on the bare deck I have never yet seen equalled) and Catomoran Jack

(who, let me inform the uninitiated, is a native gentleman, whose tailor's bill must be very reasonable, to judge by the very small quantity of clothing in use by him. This child of nature paddles about on two logs, having thereon, oranges, plantains, Trinconopoli cheroots, &c., &c. All these are offered for sale with gestures and abuse of his fellow-dealers, in language more personal than polite). A party of us proceeded on shore, and were soon surrounded by men of all castes, tongues and colours, either trying to sell articles, or offering the use of buggies, horses, palanquins, &c., for hire. Having determined on visiting an old schoolfellow, whose regiment was stationed near the Mount, I hired one of these buggies; but had not proceeded far before the horse fell, a habit he evidently had lately given way to, his knees being the worse for wear. The groom in charge, with loud tongue declared I must pay for the horse, and being in a strange land, I thought such might be the rule; but, nevertheless, plainly refused, adding that "I would ask Mr. Weller, to whose house I was going." "Ask," replied the man, "and Weller Sahib tell you to pay my master."

On arrival at Weller's, I mentioned the subject, and was certainly rather astonished to see that gentleman execute summary justice on the native, by hard blows, hard swearing, and a fearful kick, which he termed "a lifter," adding, as he came towards me, "that's the way to treat these niggers, the

beasts—how I hate them, their country, and everything belonging to it!" To my saying, "that ill-treating the niggers, as he called them, was not the way to make them either respect or like us," he observed: "That when I had been in the country as long as he had, I should thrash them too."

"I fancy not," I replied, "at any rate, I will not try it until every other remedy shall fail."

"Ah, well," he answered, "that's all very philanthropic, and will, probably, go to add a few more stones to that pavement, which is said to be entirely composed of good resolutions. But come and discuss tiffin, it is a far pleasanter subject."

Thus saying, he led the way into the house, which more resembled a tiled hut than an officer's quarters. The furniture was decidedly scanty; in one room, a camp table with two broken chairs, in the other, a cane-work bedstead, with folding legs, to each of these were chained bull-dogs, all of different degrees of ugliness. These, he informed me, were "stunners," and had that morning killed a pig which came into the compound. "Boxer, there," said he, pointing to a brute uglier than his brethren, "had a glorious chase after a donkey, which he pulled down."

These canine pets were washed and fed by a Matee boy, who afterwards attended at table. I was not sorry when the time came for me to say "good bye," for I felt that between us there was not one

feeling in common, and that my visit had not been a source of pleasure to either party.

Putting old broken knees into the buggy, I drove slowly homewards; not much pleased with this my first insight into India and Indian customs. Sincerely I hoped that this might be the dark side of the picture, and that my future existence would not be passed in the same unhappy state of mind as my quondam schoolfellow. Many of his complaints, I put down to want of occupation and a naturally bad temper; and this is the case nine times out of ten with confirmed grumblers; they abuse the country, climate and people, without ever considering how far they have adapted their manners and method of living to a strange land; and imagine that bullying, swearing, and a haughty manner will command that respect from the natives, which kindness and accessibility are much more likely to obtain.

Tired and hot, I retreated to my very small and very hot berth, immediately on arriving on board the "Governor," and slept soundly until she was away from Madras, and making the best of her way to Calcutta.

CHAPTER X.

Among the new passengers taken in at Madras, was a very old corpulent and toothless gentleman, accompanied by another much younger; but who appeared to be the old gentleman's shadow, by the way he clung to him. These we soon discovered to be nothing more or less than an old general, who had been appointed to fill a vacancy in a divisional command on the Bengal side; and his aide-de-camp, who was evidently what is termed "a nice young man," and one admirably adapted for the appointment; as neither the insults nor peevishness of the old man made him less obsequious, or less diligent in his attentions.

The advent of this old General was a source of annoyance and discomfort to every body; as from having been so long accustomed to have his own way and be implicitly obeyed, the rebuffs and differences of opinion he received were hard to bear, and frequent ebullitions of temper were the consequences. His aide-de-camp was the greatest sufferer by it, but use had made him callous; not so with others, and all of

us, who tired of being informed with an angry expression, that "you needn't roar, I am not deaf;" whenever a reply to his numerous questions had to be given to ears too deaf to catch a sound, completely deserted him, and his arrival on either quarter of the ship, was the signal for those on deck to cross over to the other. Even the managing mammas and unwilling chaperons avoided him; for though a general and likely to die, yet they could hardly consider such a thing as that "a good match."

In this state of things, seeing Mrs. Kely, the Ceylon widow, looking very pretty and very disconsolate, all alone on his side of the ship, it struck the old man that he could not do better than hobble up and commence a conversation with her. Doing so, he found in her a willing listener; and all his questions were answered in a manner so affable and kind as to render him oblivious of all around. Indeed so charmed was he, as to refuse to go below when his aide-de-camp came dutifully to announce that the first bugle for dressing before dinner had sounded; but dismissed that unhappy wight by snappishly telling him "to go to the devil;" and resumed his mumblings with the widow: the aide-de-camp immediately disappearing from the scene.

The widow listened on; and then in the sweetest tones and with playful manner, reminded the veteran, "that they must go and get ready for dinner." On

which the General gallantly offered his arm, and hobbled with his fair burden to her cabin door.

The conversation was renewed after dinner, but only for a short time. The sharp eye of the widow discovering that she was somewhat closely watched, and fearing that too great a display of fondness on her part might even awaken some spark of dormant intellect in the being before her. So with a playful "good bye, General, I must hasten away," the little schemer disappeared from the old man's side, her place being immediately occupied by the ever ready aide, who was informed in what was meant for a whisper, "That Mrs. Kely was a very nice little woman, and though she never roared to him like the others, yet he heard every word she said."

To this the A. D. C., as in duty bound, assented, adding, "and pretty, too, General."

"Pretty, eh!" replied the General, "what the devil do you know about her being pretty, I should like to know?"

"Oh! nothing, sir; but I thought—"

"What business have you to think?" growled the old fool, getting angry and jealous. "I shall feel obliged, sir, by your not thinking any more for the future; d—d puppy—pretty, eh!"

The aide-de-camp was silent, and soon all was hushed in darkness. As Calcutta was disagreeably close, the widow determined on making the most of the short time allowed her; and by every possible

means, extract a proposal from the old man before he arrived at Calcutta. Her efforts were observed by every body—somewhat to the amusement of the cadets, and the disgust of her own sex; but whether she was successful, I know not. Though report, with its hundred tongues, did say, that she did tell the old gentleman what kind of question would receive "yes" for an answer. However, by the disappointed expression on the widow's countenance, when the old fellow went ashore at Garden Reach, all concluded that her object had not been attained; though a close observer might have seen, that though disappointed, she was not defeated.

The General, under a salute from the ramparts of Fort William, was assisted on shore by his aide-de-camp and some staff officers, sent from Calcutta to meet him. This salute and these officers heralded the arrival of one, whose more fitting place would have been in an arm-chair and a gouty stool at home, far away from scenes of strife or war's alarms. Instead of this, the command of one of the largest divisions had been entrusted to him. Under such as this, armies might have to serve and be lost through his want of judgment or imbecility. Such total unfitness for command could only tend to disgust all who had the misfortune to serve under him; and appointments such as these, must give native troops either a very poor idea of general officers in England, or lead them to suppose, that a

divisional command in India is the reward of a long life, and only to be obtained when the recipient is too far gone in imbecility for anything else.

As he will not again appear on these pages, I may as well conclude his history. The little widow was not going to part with him quite so easily as with a mere good bye, but managed to renew the acquaintance in Calcutta; and played her cards well enough to cause a marriage to take place between them at the cathedral, just a few days before the General started for the North-west.

The first few days of the honey-moon were spent in the shades of Garden Reach, and then the happy pair started up country. However, as a third party is not generally taken or considered desirable on these occasions, Captain Marmalade, the aide-de-camp, received orders to proceed in advance, select a suitable house, and make certain necessary arrangements

This marriage was a sad blow to the hopes of poor Marmalade, whose life, bad as it had been before, now became insupportable; for he not only got sworn at and sneered at by the old man, but snubbed and bullied by the ex-widow. Besides all this, he had no longer free quarters or free table, but lived entirely at his own expense. The emoluments were now no longer a sufficient inducement for his continuing on the staff; so he resigned, rejoining his regiment, having his situation filled by

a better looking, and faster man; one of the ex-widow's own selection.

This state of things continued for two years, at the end of which time death laid claim to the divisional commander. His remains were carried to the grave with great pomp and show. Minute guns fired; and his handsome Arab charger (the which he had never dared to ride, though the animal was like a lamb), led behind the corpse in the usual manner. Then came a general order in which his virtues were set forth in flaming style, and the grief felt by all at his loss, described as intensely poignant; "few were like him, and seldom does it fall to the lot of man to grieve for such as he." In fact, it seemed, that in his death, the country had lost a commander only second to the great Duke; and that intellect of the highest order was the peculiar characteristic of the departed.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM where the steamer stopped, very little of the City of Palaces could be observed; the increasing number of masts as the eye followed the river up, told that this green-banked pretty-looking spot was not quite the end of our journey. The stucco-built houses, hidden in clumps of cocoa-nut and bamboo, looked handsome and cool; but were generally spoilt from the want of some regular order of architecture, they being surrounded by pillars of every imaginable and unimaginable style. The shore was of course covered with natives having every kind of conveyance, in which "Master was requested to sit and be transported to Calcutta." On the entry of a passenger into this odoriferous and heterogeneous mass, he was assailed by a complete Babel of tongues, all intent on the same thing, viz: to carry passenger and baggage away. A youngster, on his first entry, is sadly puzzled what to do, as he feels himself first pulled one way, then another, and perhaps addressed somewhat in this manner. "Master," says a man, whose dress is the nearest approach to that

elegant costume known as straps and a watchchain, "try my palanquin." "No, Master," says another, "my palkee good, Master, see," and he nearly puts the Griff's eye out with the pole, in calling his attention to the article. "Sahib," calls out another, the owner of a Roman-nosed, raw-boned epitome of a horse, hanging between the shafts of a buggy, "I go to Calcutt in five minute." "Don't bleeve him, Sir," says another, the owner of a palkee gharry, and two ponies tied to the same, with leather and string, "Calcutt four mile, I take Master all right," and believing him to be more honest than his fellows, Cadet Smith or Jones allows himself to be persuaded, and is bumped and smothered to Calcutta.

By this sort of conveyance, I arrived at Fort William dressed out in the full blaze of military uniform, *i. e.*, in a very short-waisted red jacket, a foraging cap and sword. My driver, knowing the usual forms gone through, replied for me, to the European sentry, who standing guard at the gateway, demanded if we had any "sperrits" inside; then on to the Superintendent of Cadets, and then to Town Major's office, having no little difficulty in finding my way to that officer's desk, through the number of natives hanging about. The odour arising from these was not refreshing, and I was glad when passing back again, to be directed to go to my quarters.

These I found to consist of some part of the

barracks constructed in this magnificent fort; but such a place as this ought not to have been selected as the cadets' barracks.

After clambering up some broken and dirty brick steps, I was shewn into a long dark passage, by a man with a broom, who acted as M. C. (at any rate on this occasion) to a body of officers. Ranged, at equal distances, down this dark passage were green doors; these on being opened, led into a room or rather cell of about 16 feet square, and we were informed that each room was an officer's quarter. In one corner was partitioned off a space of about a yard square, a low brick wall plastered with broken stucco separating it from the other part of the cell. Our wonder as to its intention or use, was dispelled by the Knight of the Broom, saying, "Here, Master make wash," pointing at the same time to a hole under the window, through which the foul water was supposed to escape on to the heads of passers by below. Thus was bath-room, bed-room and sitting-room combined in one; to add to our comforts, there were not either table, chair or bedstead, all these things having to be purchased by ourselves.

They say an Englishman's house is his castle, but this rule did not apply to our kennels, for they were filled with strangers, all wishing to be taken into service, and all having admirable testimonials as to honesty and character. The invariable reason for their leaving the last place, being "at their own

wish," or "the writer returning to England." Each cadet had a similar audience, but all agreed to follow the advice of one, who making himself heard above the din and noise said, "That a corpulant gentleman of dusky hue, who had something to do with the mess, volunteered to find us servants, also such articles of furniture as would adorn and be useful in these stately chambers."

This being agreed to, the corpulant gentleman and the assembly disappeared together; and soon afterwards we found ourselves the masters of several servants, and of one table, two chairs, and a camp bed, the fac-simile of the one I had seen in Weller's house at Madras, it only wanted the bull-dogs to make it complete. Then came mosquito curtains, (rather necessary, if we were to judge by the blood-thirstiness of these insects, who too impatient to wait for darkness, devoured us by daylight) and lastly a seraie, (goglet) copper basin, stand, and four water pots, commonly known as gurrurs. Thus was the palace furnished, and we, after a wash in the bath-room or bath corner, (by which the new furniture, room, and all were washed at the same time) strolled over to the mess for tiffin.

The mess, like everything else intended for cadets, was sadly neglected and ill-kept. The servants were dirty and insolent, and the rules the most absurd I ever read. Certain wines forbidden, and only certain quantities of others allowed to be drank, thus

attempting to dictate to officers (all of whom are not boys) what kind of liquor the Government considered suited for their position, and how much. At mess there appeared nobody to keep order, consequently the cadets and servants were continually disorderly; and scenes most disreputable frequently occurred. The principal cause of these scenes might have been found in a careless management, and in the bad quality of men attached as servants. Indeed, no respectable man would come to be thrashed and sworn at as these were; and nothing but the hope of gain could induce them to remain on. The head man or Khansaman was to blame, and had he been respectable, the others would have been so also; as it was, our servants were his choice and creatures, so that a young fellow stood a bad chance being villainously cheated and fleeced between them all.

Perhaps it was the want of honesty in the mess-servants, that led the "Powers that be" to take away the "Griffs' plate" and substitute some villainous bend about things of German silver; or more probably, the exigencies of the state, being greater than usual, induced the Governor-General in Council to transfer the Griffs' mess plate from the mess room to the melting pot.

The first dinner at mess was exactly like the last, all dirt and discomfort; all owing to a want of system. Each cadet called for what he liked, did as he liked, smoked more than was good for him,

made a frightful noise, and retired to his barracks and to the mosquitoes.

The next morning, what a sight for a father was each interesting youth, his whole body, face, and hands in particular, being spotted like the pard; owing to a select few of these winged worries having been left inside the curtains by our new servants. Amidst swearing of a dreadful sort, were our now bloated adversaries slaughtered; and for the remainder of the day, I regret to say, little was heard from the party who had landed only the day before, but a series of curses at and condemnation of the country and its inhabitants.

This habit of grumbling, indulged in pretty freely at home, becomes in India positively horrible; and frequently renders a man most uncompanionable and disagreeable. Even to a brother grumbler he is no companion, as they can scarcely be expected to agree as to the intensity of their dislike or disgust, with things in general, and India in particular. I know of no greater nuisance, than two of those confirmed grumblers getting together, either in a regiment or small station. They do their best to make everything appear in its worst light, and by their influence, and perseverance, tend to unsettle the minds of a great portion of their hearers.

These grumblers, I have generally found to be men of very limited ideas; ill-informed and unsettled dispositions, having within themselves no resources,

and sneering at those who have. To them, reading is a bore, drawing rubbish, and as for music, "there's the band." So, really from pure ennui, during the long hot months, these kind of men are driven to grumble; destroying their digestive organs with the everlasting cheroot and brandy, then cards and high play fill up the hiatus. This all tends to ill health, and debt, and thus the man becomes discontented and unhappy. So that, if one of these would think at all, he could find some other cause for his melancholy and misfortune than "the beastly country."

One day in Calcutta was spent exactly like another. After dinner, a palkee or buggy to take one sight seeing, generally ending with a visit to the China Bazaar, there to buy rubbish, or put in for raffles of guns, and other articles, for possessing which none of us cared sixpence. Thus went a fortnight, and with it almost all my ready money. Such sights as Calcutta had to show, I saw, and cannot say I felt any great gratification in doing so. The Cathedral is light and elegant; but ill-adapted to hearing, as it was with the greatest difficulty any complete sentence could be distinguished ten yards from the pulpit. The good old bishop preached twice, and in his earnest and eloquent address, shewed the sincerity of his intentions. There was something touching and innocent in his saying, "I hope you hear me, I speak

as loud as I can." The service was well conducted, and without any of that mummery and bowing, unhappily so much the fashion now-a-days.

On looking over certain letters of introduction, I found one addressed to a Mr. Merton, who I ascertained to be a partner in a large mercantile house in Calcutta. Delivering my letter, I was shewn through an immense assembly of Sircars, Durwans, stout oily looking Baboos and half-naked Coolies, up to a portion of the large office, portioned off by a light screen work. Behind this screen I found Mr. Merton sitting at his desk. I own to feeling some disappointment on discovering that Mr. Merton was a half caste, in which the black blood shewed most; and his way of speaking English was peculiar. However, he addressed me kindly, inquired after the writer of the letter, and hoped I would visit him at his country house at Garden, "where Mrs. Merton and the *gurls* will be glad to see you."

To an invitation so kindly given, I could do nothing else but consent to go; moreover, feeling some curiosity regarding what kind of person Mrs. Merton might be; to say nothing of "the gurls," as he termed them, who were pictured in my vivid imagination as perfect houris, all speaking broken English. It was therefore arranged that I should drive down on the morrow, and stay tiffin, at which meal I should also have Mr. Merton's company,

as the day would be a native holiday, and the house of business closed.

Driving down next day, I was met in the verandah by my host, who introduced me at once to a very pretty, fair woman, as his wife, and I found her to be as agreeable as pretty. Tiffin was announced, and afterwards as it became cooler, I was shewn over the garden by Mr. Merton, who, to my surprise, pressed me to make his house my abode during the rest of my stay in Calcutta. I did not reply at once; as never being fond of strangers, and not much fancying the ideas and manners of my host, made me for a moment hesitate; but to counterbalance the bad English, and *mauvaise honte* of Mr. Merton, there was a pretty wife and the run of my teeth for a fortnight. Balancing the invitation in my mind, I considered the pretty wife was an excuse for all, so I accepted; and sending to the fort for my traps, was soon after installed in a grand room looking on to the Hooghly; and having therewith placed at my disposal a nigger, gorgeously dressed in muslin and turban, who hoped "his honor (meaning myself) would call for sherry, brandy, and soda water, whenever his honor want," which somehow was often the case during my short residence at Merton Villa.

At dinner (to which I sat down in the before-mentioned very short-waisted, tight-sleeved, red jacket) I was introduced to the gurls, who were

decidedly dusky, and possessed of manners very similar to those of the brother. Jane, the eldest and least black, informed me with a winning smile, that "she did very much regret not being to tiff, but her brother never tell that you was coming," and, chimed in the younger sister, "so we went to Pittars and Exchange, to look at new dresses and fine jewelry, just come from England by last steamer." This reminded them that I had just come out from England, too, so questions innumerable were asked me as to the fashions of bonnets and dresses; none of which I could answer; only knowing, though I did not tell them, that their dresses were vulgar and ill-made—the style being somewhat the same as that worn when Queen Anne began to reign.

Their praises of the English and England were quite refreshing to listen to; but from their ideas and general conversation, I soon discovered that their travels had never exceeded a dozen miles beyond Calcutta.

After tea, these syrens volunteered a song, but neither the words nor the air could I discover, but imagined the whole thing must have been of a melancholy tendency, to judge by the dreariness of the time, and the quantities of oh's and ah's in the words. The duet ended, we retired for the night, without my being able to get one moment's fair conversation with the pretty wife, for whose

sake alone I had consented to stay. The dear darkies looked unutterable things as they skipped up-stairs, whilst I did the same to the pretty wife without its being returned, or, do I believe, even recognized.

CHAPTER XII.

Before tiffin was over next day, I had heartily repented of coming. Jane was too kind; and cadet though I was, by her manner and extreme disinterestedness, shewed very plainly that my advances would be received kindly. Mrs. Merton spoke but little, and like many other pretty women, had very little else to recommend her but good looks. Sometimes I thought her reserve might be attributed to the set with whom she was forced to live, as both in ideas and manners, she was infinitely superior to them all. How she, a fair pretty and lady-like woman, could ever marry the black vulgar dog, her husband, was and ever will be a riddle to me. Two days after this, my horror of their vulgarity reached a climax, as on driving with them on the course, which happened to be more than usually crowded on that evening, the lovely Jane, leaning out of the carriage, called out to a black fellow, dressed in a white jacket and black hat, who seated in a buggy, had bowed in passing. "I say, Mr. Rosario, won't you come to the willa and dinner to-night, as

we have Mr. Willars, a cadet, staying with us, (pointing to me) and I dare say you will get on capitally?"

"Yes, Miss Jane, I come, thank you very much," replied the nigger—and drove on, leaving me in no very amiable mood at having been shewn off publicly, and been told that a nigger of Mr. Rosario's description would get on capitally with me. How I wished the drive to end, and the horses' heads to be turned homewards, even though it was to meet this capital nigger, anything rather than continue the observed of all observers, as I imagined myself to be, so many having heard the invitation given.

On coming into the drawing-room before dinner was announced, I found my black friend there before me, sitting by Jane, and looking satisfied with himself and things in general. On my being introduced to him by Miss Merton, he rose from his easy position, and placing both hands on the gastric regions, said with a low bow, "How do, Sar, wery hot, ah you feel, new from England?" then reseating himself, he resumed his conversation with Miss Merton.

Before dinner was announced, I had full time allowed me to study this extraordinary animal and capital nigger. His get up was unique; and the self-satisfied way in which he rolled about, made him look if anything more ridiculous. A very small

white linen jacket with a very broad collar, then an equally small waistcoat, nearly concealed by an immense gold chain, seals, and watch key, the whole extending from one pocket to the other; pantaloons short and tight, shewing off a pair of spindle-shanks to great disadvantage; and such feet, ye gods! Great flat, fin-looking things, covered over with pumps in which numerous bows were fixed. An abundance of shirt collar, a blue ribbon round the throat, and you have Mr. Rosario.

I took Mrs. Merton into dinner, the elder gurl falling to the lot of Rosario; but at the table he was placed, much to his disgust, on the same side as the younger sister, Miss Merton being to my right, and thus received from me much attention and civility, which evidently did not produce a happy state of mind in her native friend opposite, who rudely contradicted me several times, and nearly cut his tongue to pieces whilst eating with his knife, simply because Jane smiled kindly on me, when I desired information from him on the subject of native marriages.

Waxing valiant with wine, he informed me that officers were "very grand think themselves, but cadet nothing." Not answering him, I continued the conversation with Miss Merton, saying loud enough for darkee to hear, "That of course, Mr. Rosario never having been in any society, was unable to give an opinion regarding officers, but that he was drunk

and impertinent." To this dear Jane assented, adding, "he not know officer, he only clerk, and always gets tipsy." This was too much for the capital nigger, thus to hear from the lips of his own charmer, how lightly he was esteemed, being moreover called drunk. Seizing the table he rose, as if to leave the room, or to do some dreadful act; but the ladies getting up at the same moment, completely frustrated his intentions, for he sat down again, and did his best to finish a bottle of claret, given him by Mr. Merton, who told him "to drink that and never mind."

"Never mind," replied he, half weeping; "all very fine to say never mind, but she said I was only a cle—" but the end of the sentence was lost in the wine glass. When I left for the ladies, the capital nigger was crying drunk, talking of injured feelings, and most unwilling to take the advice of our host, which was to go home and go to bed.

The usual screeching took place at the piano, but pleading my anxiety to pack my boxes and get my things ready for a short visit I was going to pay my agents, who had offered me a room, I escaped the infliction; and on the morrow, after breakfast, took myself and things off to Chowringhee.

Next morning I met the Merton's carriage on the strand, so rode up to say a civil word and to make the usual inquiries. Whilst doing so, Mr. Rosario appeared on the opposite side for a similar purpose,

addressing himself to Miss Merton, who instead of replying to his question concerning her health; asked after his, "hoping his head did very much ache, and that he would not get tipsy, and quarrel with gentlemens again." To this the capital nigger replied not, but with a depressed countenance, turned his horse's head, and left his faithless Chloe.

A day or two after these events, I received orders to proceed to Benares and there do duty with the — regiment; and as I was to lose no time in starting, I went immediately to get such things as were necessary for the trip upwards. These were to be had cheaper and better at the China bazaar, and so there I directed my steps. Entering the shop of one of the native dealers, who should I see, but my dark friend once again. Pushing rudely by he sent me with no little weight against a table, on which were placed tumblers, &c., thereby causing two to be smashed.

The next instant I was before him, and angrily demanded the meaning of such usage; but met with no reply, receiving instead rather a severe blow on the forehead from the silver-mounted handle of a Malacca cane held by him. A moment sufficed to wrench the stick from him, and in the short struggle he fell on his knees, being in a position so extremely favourable to receive punishment, that I could not resist laying it well into him across the tightened breech. At first he breathed defiance, but getting

sorer, roared for pardon and mercy. This I granted, first making him pay for the broken glass, and then accelerated his progress into the street with a lifter, as my friend Weller at Madras used to term an os cogian kick.

I never heard or saw anything more of Mr. Rosario, but dare say he succeeded in re-establishing himself in Jane's good graces very soon after my departure from Calcutta. Not but what I took care to tell her all about the story, when I drove down to say adieu before leaving for Benares. Jane appeared cast down, and shook me warmly by the hand; whilst her's, young humbug as I felt myself to be, I pressed somewhat tightly.

That evening I was steaming past the large and pretty cantonment of Barrackpore towards my destination.

Of the large party on board, the greater portion consisted of cadets proceeding to do duty either at Dinapore or Benares. There were a few ladies, an old officer or two, and a couple of healthy-looking indigo planters, whose anecdotes of sporting and wild adventures made many wish to have seen the same. We cadets were all placed under the charge of an elderly subaltern, whose chief delight was in drawing. Indeed, he was no mean artist, and often have I gazed with delight, as some of the scenery passed by, looked doubly beautiful when transferred to his drawing board. From him I first acquired a

love for this gentle art; and through it, often have the long days of July, August and September slipped away, as quickly as the short and delightfully cool days of December, January and February.

Fast glided the steamer up the muddy river, now under high banks, and then under palm, cocoa-nut, banian, and other Indian trees. Here and there, scattered over the landscape, were villages and white temples, hiding themselves from view in masses of foliage, looking from the steamer's deck quite cool and beautiful; very different from the reality, which shews them to be but a miserable collection of mud huts, some flat-roofed, others with a thin thatching. The dirty, narrow street, with perhaps a white gaudy-looking Mahomedan temple all trumpery and stucco placed in a corner, will be found to be choked up with mud in the rainy season, and dirty bamboo bedsteads, alive with animals, always. The outskirts of this romantic village are sure to be diversified with filthy ponds, in which lie mangy buffaloes, and round which wander skeleton pigs, haggard and hungry-looking. The inhabitants are fit for such scenes; their natures but little removed from the beasts around. The men, if Hindoo, black, cunning, and money lenders, or if a Mussulman, cringing, swaggering, and cruel. Mixed with these, are dogs and children innumerable, the whole as horrible and as disgusting a scene as can be well imagined.

Moughyr was passed, and the usual quantity

of buffalo horn bracelets, and straw fans, bought. Then Dinapore, discharging here a large cargo of cadets, a few troops, and a violin-playing, somewhat romantic lieutenant. In return for these we received officers, and steamed onwards.

A day or two more, and tall minarets with the temple-studded bank told we were approaching that holy city, Benares.

Nearer and nearer came the sound of hundreds of temple bells ringing, and the busy hum of men. Then we passed ghat after ghat, each vieing with the other in costly magnificence. Their hundreds of steps nearly concealed by the thousands of human beings, passing and repassing to the sacred river. Here could be seen the believer in Vishnu and Khrishna, laving his yellow carcase in the stream, muttering prayers as he threw a few drops of holy water over his shaven head. A step or two further in the river is a girl, with a form perfect for symmetry and grace, hardly hidden by the covering of finest muslin, which adheres tightly to her person, as she bends in the sacred element. Scowling near, is the opium-eating, large-bearded, fanatical Mussulman, whose Koran tells him that Mahomed-Russool Allah, and that the infidels before him should be rooted out. Aye, and would be by him and his, who once ruled India, were it not for the stronger hand of Britain, who lets each worship God or their Gods as they think best.

CHAPTER XIII.

Passing these, the steamer at length was fastened to the shore; and ere long, most of us were making the best of our way in hack conveyances to the distant cantonments. I to report myself to Captain Squaretoes, Adjutant of the regiment to which I was appointed to do duty.

After some difficulty, from want of knowledge of the language, in finding the Captain's house, I was shewn by an orderly into the presence of a stout, good-humoured, but elderly-looking man, who guessing my errand, addressed me with, "How do you do, Sir, come to report arrival I suppose; your name may I ask?"

"Villars, Ensign Villars," I replied.

"Ah, Ensign Villars; just come, eh? Well, Mr. Villars, glad to see you; my name is Squaretoes, Brevet Captain and Adjutant Squaretoes of the 80th Regiment, Native Infantry."

"I saw that on referring to the Army List," I replied.

"Not unlikely," returned the communicative

Adjutant. "But you havn't surely yet taken to study that interesting production; I never look at it, being heartily sick of seeing the senior Lieutenant of the 80th always in the same place, and only a Brevet Captain. However, luck's a Lord, and if one can only live long enough, promotion may come. Have you got a house, or what are you going to do for quarters?"

"I have made no arrangements, having come direct up from the steamer," I replied.

"No, well come along with me; and I will see what can be done for you. But to say truth, there are such a lot of Griffs—I beg pardon, I mean unposted Ensigns, that all the houses are taken. However, I will see if you cannot be accommodated in the big house near the Church. It is pretty full already, but I really know of none other," then added, "wait a moment until I finish this letter, and I will take you to see it, as we come home from calling on the Colonel. In the meantime, if you smoke, there is my case for you, there are some capital weeds in it." Thus saying, he resumed his pen. The letter finished—his uniform was put on, and away we drove to the Colonel's.

This elderly gentleman, was like most of his tribe, none the better for being from thirty-five to forty years working up to his present rank and position. Probably he had once been a fair officer, but years of India had not improved either his nerve or know-

ledge. The first thirty years of his service, like most others, had been spent in a subordinate capacity, and now that he had command, the necessary discretion was wanting. At one time bullying and dictatorial to those below him, and at another sacrificing his officers, so as to obtain favour with the non-commissioned officers and sepoys. He had a great idea of his own dignity; and lived in fear and ill-temper, that any of his juniors should dare to lessen it. His delight was a parade ground and orderly-room; and the veneration with which he mentioned the Commander-in-Chief and Adjutant-General was perfectly ludicrous. Indeed to speak against either of these *always efficient* individuals was treason of the deepest dye.

His reception of me was cold and haughty. Towards his Adjutant, his manner was dictatorial and overbearing. After asking if certain papers were ready for signature, he wished us good morning, and away we drove to my future home.

This I found to be a huge, flat-roofed house, once white-washed, with the usual number of pillars supporting the verandahs, all moulded in that exquisite style of architecture peculiar to European houses in India. These pillars were more or less broken, the mortar chipped off, and altogether in perfect keeping with the exterior and interior of the house to which they belonged.

On our driving up to the door, we were welcomed

by the howling, baying, and barking of dozens of curs, all of whom, attracted by the sound of our wheels, left their masters for a moment, to see who the new-comers were. These were immediately followed by their masters, whose proposal for "Three cheers for Captain Squaretoes," was interrupted by that officer's roaring out,

"Can you fellows manage to find room for Mr. Villars?"

"Oh, yes," shouted a dozen voices, "lots of room; you know we are not particular as to a shade; the more the merrier! Come along, Mr. Villars."

Hearing this, Squaretoes wished me good morning, and drove away.

After replying to sundry questions regarding my prospects, means, the time I had been in the country, &c., &c., one youngster abruptly asked me "What my hopes of accommodation here might be?" for, added he, "Griff's Hall, as this superb, though rather dilapidated building is called, is as full as it can be. Indeed, a precious deal fuller than many would like; but that, of course, is a mere matter of fancy. However, make yourself at home, Mr. Villars, don't fret your internal economy, and we will send a fellow to the steamer for your traps."

"Thank you," I replied, "but if I inconvenience, I would rather not intrude."

"No intrusion," said the youngster, "we shall be very glad to have you; but it is as I before said, a

precious tight fit. Last night, two fellows slept on that painted thing they dignify by the name of sofa, their toes in each other's faces; and as for young Famine there," pointing to a very thin, gentlemanly-looking lad with cross-belts on, at a few yards distance, "he turns in with the beer bottles."

All this time the noise going on was indescribable, whilst the room was so filled with tobacco smoke, the result of twenty lighted cheroots all blazing away at once, as to render every object indistinct at two yards away. The camp table was covered with opened bottles of beer, half-emptied tumblers, and cigar ends. The spilt beer and cheroot ash all over the room, rendered the sitting-room of "Griff's Hall," not the cleanest or most comfortable place in the world.

In this abode, the dresses of the young men appeared to be more cool than becoming; generally shirt sleeves and loose drawers, but sometimes white trowsers. In one corner, was a young man blowing away at a cornet-à-piston, his efforts to make himself heard above the prevailing din, causing his eyes to protrude in a very painful manner. Near him stood another lad, scraping away on the violin, counting time most carefully, his eyes never moving from a piece of beer-stained music pinned to the wall before him. Round these were a set of youngsters, holding in their hands brass basons; these basons they beat with sticks, and at the same time roared

out the chorus of a song; "doing orchestra," as they called this most infernal melody.

After getting more accustomed to the dim, religious light caused by tobacco smoke, I saw at some distance the youngster pointed out to me as Famine, still in his shirt sleeves and cross-belts, going through the musket drill, under the superintendence of a fine, handsome-looking grenadier Sepoy—whose gravity of countenance was never relaxed by the row around, or temper lost by the facetious remarks, and frequent interruptions made by the cadets looking on.

"Phir sahib kuro. Order arms," said the Sepoy, for the tenth time.

"Now, Famine," cried out some youngster; "don't you hear, shoulder arms?"

"Ugh, clumsy," said another, "that's order! Fancy what a fellow doesn't know the difference betweeen 'order' and 'shoulder.'"

"I say, young Parish," cried out a third, "don't go bumping that blunderbuss down in that reckless manner, or John Company will walk into your affections for twenty rupees; and then you will have to sell your step to the Sergeant-Major, so as to raise the money."

"Sepoy," said another, "don't you think it would be better to dismiss Ensign Famine, to-day; and to inform the ever-to-be-respected Adjutant Squaretoes, that this very slim gentleman, or

Ensign Douglas, as he calls himself, is too stupid to shoulder arms properly?"

"Ap Malik;" answered the man, not understanding a word of the long sentence said in English to him.

"Oh, I do wish you fellows would leave me alone and let me get through this dreadful 'manual and platoon.' Old Squaretoes pitches into me every day for not improving; and I defy any fellow on earth improving or learning anything when bothered as I am;" at last said Douglas.

This speech gave rise instantly to a general howling and screeching. In the midst of which the Sepoy, saluting, took his leave; seeing that no attention was likely to be given to the manual for that day; and no doubt thinking to himself, "what a farce this is, young sahibs coming here to learn their drill."

Tiffin was now announced; and all hurried away into another room, in which were a few rascally looking servants, most of them with napkins or chowries driving away the flies from queer looking mutton chops and grilled chickens. These formed lunch or tiffin.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE tables, for there were four or five, were of all heights and kinds; each tied by the legs to the other, as a means of keeping it up. Round these sat the young fellows, amusing themselves with beer at tiffin, and brandy and water and banter at Douglas afterwards. This banter, or as they termed it chaffing, appeared to me to consist chiefly of personalities and impertinent jokes at the poverty and poor outfit of "Famine," or Douglas; and sneering at his reserve and unwillingness to "join in fun," as they called making a row all day, drinking half the night, and ruining their credit and constitutions.

This joking was too childish and personal to please me, and I felt inclined more than once to interpose; but when I considered it was no affair of mine, but that Douglas was old and apparently sensible enough to put them down if he chose, I determined to hold my tongue and try, through the Adjutant on the morrow, for other quarters.

As the quantity of beer increased, so did the personalities, under which I could plainly see poor

Douglas was far from easy. At last he rose from his chair, and in a voice at first somewhat tremulous from vexation, but afterwards steady and clear, he addressed the party thus,

"Well, gentlemen, I have now for days been subject to your remarks and attempts at wit. You cannot but know such are neither pleasant to hear, nor always conceived in the best taste; however, let that pass; I did not so much care as long as we were alone, but to-day, with a new officer present, you appear to have strained every effort to hold me up to ridicule, and to be amusing at my expense. I see nothing to be ashamed of in my outfit—that it is not as good or extravagant as others I allow; but no one is the sufferer by that, except myself; moreover it is enough and good. As to the reason for my not joining in what you call fun, and waste my money; it is because in the first place I dislike to do so, and in the next, I have not the means, for I am poor, and my father who has a large family to support, is poorer. Knowing this, gentlemen, I am unwilling to enter into unnecessary expenses, for I know not how soon I may be called upon to render him assistance; and bad must the son be who would refuse such, because he could not find the means owing to his shameful extravagance. Now yet another thing, and I have done; my 'pauperish appearance,' as you facetiously term my being thin. That is God's determination, and as such not for

man to be merry on; and as to my education that is as good as yours—it having been conducted by a fellow of his college and no mean scholar."

"But how did you come to India?" interrupted a young fellow smoking away like a steam engine. "Did the parish send you?"

"No," replied Douglas, not at all disconcerted by the abruptness and rudeness of the question. "I did not put the parish to any expense on my account. Poor people can have rich friends; and I have some well enough off to pay my passage; and now I think you know enough about me, and mine. You see I am not ashamed of my poverty, or of being the son of a poor man; so joke away as long as you like, you will not annoy me; but be advised by me to be witty without being personal.

After this explanation, Douglas rose high in the estimation of his hearers, and was, for some days after, free from impertinences and provocation; many now voted him a capital fellow, and were making themselves quite agreeable when the bugles rang out the first call for evening parade.

Uniform was put on, and the lot started away mounted on every sort of horse for the rendezvous.

I, being like a new boy at school, was not expected to attend to work for the first day or two; and was thus ere long left alone. After some time passed in thinking over all that had occurred, I

determined on strolling out towards the city, and see this far-famed place. I was disappointed in finding anything magnificent. Sometimes as I wandered on I would come across a handsome building, hidden by mud huts and spoilt by red paint. Then the streets were narrow and dirty, and rendered dangerous by the passing of great elephants, on whose backs was often seated a naked Brahmin, or still worse, strings of grumbling camels, laden with the fruits of distant Caubul, or the much loved but strong smelling assafœteda, would block up the narrow way.

Perhaps in some rather more open spot would be a "bowlee" or well, with a flight of steps leading to the water. Planted around were plantain, palm, and peepul trees; their grateful shade being taken advantage of by dozens of Fakirs, or naked devotees, their ash-covered bodies making one turn with disgust from otherwise a pleasing scene. Drawing water, were girls whose forms, worthy of a Flaxman, could hardly be said to be concealed by the thin drapery, gracefully thrown over them. Onward I wandered, seeing little else but Brahmins, sacred bulls, and naked ash-covered men—sometimes some Mussulmen would pass me, swaggering in tinsel and long hair. Thus I went until darkness warned me to return, and retracing my steps, soon after I was one of twenty preparing myself for mess.

I found the mess very differently conducted from the only one I had hitherto known. Here all was

quiet and gentlemanly. Even the thirty or forty griffs seemed to be under some restraint, and kept their familiar jokes either for their own hearing, or for more congenial moments. Dinner passed over somewhat silently; nor did the tongues begin to wag until the cloth removed, brandy and water with cheroots were in use. Some of the conversation was really good and on scientific subjects; but most of it touched upon horses and dogs—and as each, having some of these, thought he must be a judge, the differences of opinion were great and numerous. I made a capital listener, and was beginning to wonder if ever a man possessed a good horse, and not "a regular screw," when my silence was broken by having to answer the question of a Captain Haines, who wished to know "if I had yet bought a horse?"

"No," I replied.

"Then I can suit you at any figure you like," said Haines.

"Thank you," I said; "but if I am to judge by all I hear, there are no sound horses to be had; all seem screws."

"I," said the Captain, looking great things; "keep no screws; no man can say I stick him; a man may come and buy from me if he likes, but he will never find a screw—"

"Really!" interrupted Captain Squaretoes. "I don't know what you might call that brute you lent

me to ride at the artillery inspection, but my bones ached through the weakness of his back sinews for months afterwards."

"Why with your weight what horse could be expected to gallop over ploughed fields?" asked Haines. Then again turning towards me, he said, "Horses in India are not so strong as in England, but much cheaper; so if you want one, I would advise you to see a horse I have, before some one else gets it."

As he continued to praise his horses, I began to think they were superior and had none of those ills to which horse flesh is heir; however, I declined for the present having a horse, giving as my reason, that I was somewhat hard put to for cash.

"Oh, don't let that bother you," replied the gallant Captain; "if you like to buy my horse, you can have lots of time to pay in. Will you come over to my house and look at him?" This I declined doing until next day, as I was too tired. Finding another youngster as tired as myself, we left for Griffs' Hall.

I found my camp-bed put up in a corner, looking comfortable enough; but had scarcely been asleep an hour, before I was awoke by the practical jokes of my brother officers; who, having returned from mess more or less tipsy, were amusing themselves by turning my bed and myself over on to the floor. Finding they were drunk, I took it good temperedly,

and thereby got rid of them without much trouble; then slept soundly until the bugles sounded for morning parade and drill.

Ere long, I was practising "right about face;" being told by the Sergeant, drilling me, "to put the ball of the toe against the 'eel of the left fut; then wheel a full circle to the right, and bring the 'eel of the right fut sharp into its position as it was afore." This I found no easy matter to do, and was staggering in my efforts when the drill was dismissed.

On my road home, I was accosted by Captain Haines, who renewed the previous Tuesday evening's conversation regarding the horse; and at his request I went to his stables.

There were a good many animals, chiefly ponies; from out of which he selected a chestnut, "as the sort for me." (I having previously told him that I liked a horse to be a little impetuous.) After trying him and approving, we came to terms, which were these—that I was to pay one hundred rupees, half down, and the balance in two months. A saddle and bridle being put on him, I rode home, pleased with my bargain.

The fifty rupees were sent by the groom, who accompanied me for the purpose of taking back again his master's saddle and bridle; and I announced my having become the owner of a quadruped to the inhabitants of the Warren, or Griffs' Hall, who simultaneously rushing to the door, gave

their opinions pretty freely concerning "the brute," as they were pleased to term him.

"I know him," said one; "Haines sold him to you didn't he?"

I answered him in the affirmative.

"Well," he continued, "Haines sold him once before to young Grimes for one hundred and twenty, and took him back again for a guilder when Grimes went away. Just you look out how you ride him over rough ground; for he doesn't fall, but turns somersaults. Nothing, under standing on his head and rolling over on to his tail, suits him."

This was a pleasing description of my valuable purchase; and from that instant both he and his late master, Captain Haines, fell very considerably in my estimation.

The account I soon found, by experience, to be true enough; and on asking Captain Haines to take back the animal as he was not as good as described; that officer at first blustered about my taking him for a horse dealer, and did I mean to say he had cheated me? But seeing this produced no effect, he at last flatly refused; so I spoke my mind pretty distinctly to him—that being the only revenge I could have; and in reply was told, I was a "wretched griff," and desired to take myself and steed away. This I did in no amiable mood.

This Captain Haines was one of a numerous class, whose red coat and commission give them the position

of officers; but whose petty dealings and love of over-reaching, render them better adapted for Holywell Street—owing to their fondness for sticking another officer with a horse, or persuading him into buying something utterly useless, at a price far above its market valne. Many a youngster finds the first trammels of debt, and perhaps hopes to emancipate himself from difficulties by doing the same thing. To my certain knowledge, this Haines increased his monthly pay very considerably by the mere sale of ponies and horses to such griffs as were sent up to do duty; his plan being to purchase two or three animals at a time in the bazaar, and having improved looks by a little grooming, sell them to the first comer at an enormous per centage above the price given by him, warranting them perfect in every respect. Many of his brother officers were fully aware of his doings, and though they often spoke strongly on the subject, yet I never saw one willing to take up the cudgels for the sake of the youngsters; or were they the least bit less friendly to this gallant Captain — Sodaugur though he was.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE next morning, the whole of us youngsters talked over my affair with Haines, and various tales were told of the means resorted to by him for making money. Besides that of selling horses, guns, pictures, watches, or indeed anything saleable; he did a little banking on his own account, lending at enormous interest, and imitating the shareholders of the banks of the country generally, by being satisfied with personal security, and not allowing a victim to escape from his clutches until nothing more could be extracted.

It appeared that all but Douglas, better known as Famine, had in one way or another contributed to swell his gains, and he alone escaped, by his poverty, having refused in the first instance to buy a horse from Haines, but to look about and see if he could not find one cheaper. This he succeeded in doing, and ever since that, became a mark of special dislike to Captain Haines; a matter of very little consequence to Douglas, whose love of fair dealing and

open-heartedness, would have been, in any case, an effectual bar to anything like fellowship between him and Haines.

Some Rajah living across the river offered us a day's hunting in his grounds, and we determined to take advantage of it; so hog spears were in great request, we being told that the deep grass round the grounds and along the river had some wild pig in it.

A day being fixed, and all ready, away we went, a motley crew—each man with a great spear in his hand, and mounted on every conceivable kind of horse, from the old blood Arab, down to the ambling Tattoo. As we neared the ferry, we were addressed by a gentleman wearing a great deal of muslin round his neck, and dressed in sombre garments, who turned out to be a missionary, being sent out to convert the heathen, and thought perhaps that the wild set before his eyes, were as much in need of conversion as any. Probably he was right; and though his lecture was received good-temperedly, and with three cheers, yet it did make an impression on some, who considered the missionary not far wrong, when he told us plainly, "That of all days in the week, the Sabbath was not the one to have chosen for hog hunting," adding, "that the sport was very dangerous, and we all far too young to know anything about it."

The lecture had not the effect of stopping us; and

we proceeded across the river, reconciling, as we best could, the bad deed to our consciences; the great excuse being that Sunday was our only holiday, all other days being occupied in drill and parades.

Our sport did not attain the extent of our hopes. The first four hours being worn away in beating backwards and forwards through the jungle. At length, "Tally ho," "Gone away," was heard from the right, and instantly every horse was galloping in that direction. The grass being very high and growing in lumps, it proved a very difficult matter to get along at any pace; but soon the country became more open, and there sure enough was a pig running for dear life, about five hundred yards in advance. The sight was the signal for a general shout, and a general plunging of spurs into the sides of the already dead beaten horses. The faster the pig went, the more the spurring, until at last broken ground and failing strength, had the usual effect on animals such as these; viz: by scattering horses and riders in different positions, and with more or less injury, on Mother Earth. The few, better mounted, succeeded in spearing the *boar*, which offered no resistance, but was, in my belief, the property of some of the villages close round. This idea at that time though, could not for an instant be allowed, and we, (that is those who had done the gallant deed, and not been thrown or bruised) went home rejoicing, only to find ourselves

well laughed at at mess, and called "a parcel of griffs."

The conversation at this place had lately changed from horse and dog to war, which now seemed to threaten, as the papers were full of reports of invasion from the Sikhs. Indeed, for some time, it was believed that an engagement had actually taken place on the frontier; and oh! how anxiously did each heart beat with the desire to have an opportunity of seeing service. How every day, as the reports came oftener and war more certain, did we youngsters wish we might be posted to regiments on the frontier, and yet earn a name, instead of idling our time here, and "doing goose-step, cursing Sergeant Jones." But time wore on. Orders were issued for concentrating our troops, but no vacancies filled up. So we lived on hope, and continued to keep bull dogs, smoke cheroots, and drink brandy and water at the Warren.

About this time I received a letter from home; a long, kind note from my sister Ella. She told me that there had been an awful scene between Henry and the Governor, about money; but that my mother had so taken the part of Henry, as to make the old gentleman again agree to Henry's wishes, and pay off debts. That my sister Jane had had a proposal of marriage from old Davis, who got a flea in his ear for his pains. Then, that old Lewis, my first school-master, had been arrested by the

butcher, and was now in the county jail, with the school broken up. "No doubt," she added, "greatly to the delight of the boys and neighbourhood generally; whose fruit trees will now have a fair chance." Winding up her long, and interesting letter with "how often, dearest Philip, do I think I can see you, looking so handsome in your uniform, sitting under palm trees, with a native holding a handsome umbrella over your head, whilst you dispense justice."

This last sentence was too much for me, and I roared, until my sides ached with laughter. The idea of my being buttoned up to the chin in a red jacket, and with a great stiff stock on, ruralizing and distributing justice—all the surrounding niggers clapping their hands with pleasure at my decisions. The dear girl was like many others, not alone of her sex, but of English people generally, in a most perfect state of ignorance regarding India, and of the means employed for its government. Her ideas were chiefly formed from the few lines of description given to this magnificent country in modern geographies, and also from a worked screen in the drawing room of St. Helens—in which, worked on a brilliant ground of intense green, with a very yellow and red sky, were palm trees of all sizes with golden fruit, looking like apples, three to each tree. Under the largest of these palms, was standing a man in a turban, surrounded by others, who supported

a parachute over him. The intense green represented tropical vegetation, while the distant mountains with white tops, were supposed to be the Himalaya.

As the mail was just going out, I immediately answered it, informing her of the difference between a Bengal civilian, and a Bengal subaltern. The former, being the distributer of justice, or what is intended as such, living in clover, and not under palm trees; whilst the latter was a fellow dressed up in a red jacket for a goodly portion of his existence, and passing it on the parade ground, receiving as a reward, more kicks than half-pence, commonly called monkeys' allowance.

Old Lewis being shut up was a source of joy, and I concluded my letter with the kind wish that he might never be emancipated.

At length the wished for postings arrived, and I found myself placed as fourth ensign in the 76th Regiment Bengal Native Infantry, and directed to join immediately—the regiment being stationed in the North-West, and one whose honorary distinctions and colours shewed how often in Indian history had this regiment borne part. There were many of us posted at the same time, and as most of the regiment having vacancies, were at that time on the frontier, the greater part went that way—our passage being taken and arranged for by the Major of Brigade, in a steamer proceeding from this city to Allahabad. We were all placed under charge of an officer;

when who should this be, but Captain Haines! whose talents having been discovered by His Excellency, he was placed in the Commissariat Department, where no doubt he succeeded in giving satisfaction to the Government and himself also.

Among the party going under Haines, was besides myself, Douglas and Trevor. The latter, a wild, violent young fellow, but always good-tempered and amusing. We three determined, as soon as reaching Allahabad, to travel together towards the North-West, and strain every nerve to be in time for any action that might occur. Now report had become a certainty, as the Sikhs had crossed the Sutlej, and an engagement expected every day. Indeed, now though very late in the day, preparations to meet the danger were being made, and large bodies of troops which had been stationed at Meerut during the hot weather, had received orders to move northwards.

The general orders were full of orders for constructing divisions and brigades; and with some of these, Lord Hardinge was marching to the relief of Ferozepore, which place appeared to be at the mercy of the enemy. All these things combined, made us feel sure that war was inevitable; and each hour was counted, from the time we left Benares until the arrival at Allahabad.

The trip between these two cities was almost barren of incident, Captain Haines made himself

very disagreeable to all. To Douglas and myself in particular; so much so, as to cause Colonel Cantor, who was also a passenger, to remark that he appeared to forget "we were equally officers with himself." To which Haines did not deign a reply.

For the first few days of our voyage upwards, things went smoothly enough. As the weather was cool, everyone remained under the awning on deck. The ladies reading and working; the gentleman doing "sammy," which I may explain to the uninitiated as meaning civil. There were daily small rows among the youngsters or griffs as they were always termed; but these never led to anything serious—until one day a couple of ensigns were going to have a duel, on the steamer coming to anchor for the night. This coming to the ears of the captain of the vessel, he mentioned the fact to Captain Haines, who "was not going to interfere in these matters, but let the youngsters settle it." These were his words.

The ship captain not being satisfied, reported the subject to Colonel Cantor, who, calling the youngsters before him, asked them both to promise to do nothing of the sort; and after some time, and with no little difficulty, made them both shake hands, and endeavour to forget that they had intended, ere that day was done, to try and commit murder.

The cause of the row was as absurd as are almost

always the causes of every row. It appeared that Ensign Smith had called the pet bull-dog of Ensign Jones, "an ugly brute, and not worth the rope it would take to hang him." This caused a retort in somewhat the same style to be passed on a squint-eyed cur, the property of Ensign Smith. The wordy war soon waxed fast and furious, and leaving the dogs, went to their masters, who informed each other that they were "awful scoundrels," and the lie was bandied about so frequently, that nothing under pistols for two and coffee for one, the survivor to drink the coffee, would efface the stain.

The river being very low, it took us some time reaching Allahabad, as we frequently were aground; and then, after getting off the sand bank, had to retrace our steps and try another channel. However, notwithstanding all delays and drawbacks, we at length arrived at the junction of the rivers Jumna and Ganges, and ere long found ourselves fastened alongside the bank under the fort.

CHAPTER XVI.

This Allahabad seemed to me a wonderful place. Built on the junction of two immense rivers, one, the Holy Gunga, rolling on towards the sea, its waters stained with mud and filth; whilst to the left was the Jumna, clear as a looking glass, and only separated from the Ganges by a strip of low land, running to a point where the rivers meet. The banks were covered with temples; and standing in these waters, were hundreds of persons, many of them pilgrims, who had come many hundred miles to bathe in the sacred river. Men, women, and children, all more or less naked, gathered together promiscuously, and intent in adoration of their deity. Along the banks were dying persons—brought down on their charpoys or light bamboo beds, and left just deep enough in the water to cause the least rise to wash the whole away. Near these, were groups of persons gathered round the burning corpse of a relative; when reduced to ashes, this would be cast into the holy stream.

Close to our steamer were numerous beautiful girls, filling their eathern pots with water, and bathing; their dress being but little more than Venus possessed on her exit from the deep. We remained gazing at this last group some time, and then proceeded to the Major of Brigade for orders, and to get our dawks laid for the Upper Provinces. This we found could not be done for three days; so many dawks having lately been running, as to have knocked up all the bearers. We were recommended waiting that time at the Dak Bungalow, and seeing no means of getting onwards, we resolved to do so, and proceeded to that habitation for the purpose.

This bungalow, like almost all of its class, was a disgrace to the builders, and far too small to afford the necessary accommodation for what it was intended, viz: a house for travellers. This mud resting-place had no glazed doors, but only Venetian blinds; consequently, in the hot weather it was scarcely habitable, owing to heat and flies. Inside was far worse than the exterior, everything more or less dirty and broken. The furniture, consisting of one broken, camp-table and two broken chairs, were, I should imagine, picked up at a sale of fire-wood. The charge for using this house, was to each person composing a party (even a man and his wife paying separately), one rupee. The payment being the same whether you occupied the best, *i. e.*, the only room, or went shares with the mosquitoes in the

enclosed part of the verandah, called a bathing-room. Also there was no difference of charge for remaining twenty-four hours or one minute. The attendance was one servant, who supplied the starved fowl, dirty cloth, and lead spoons for a considerable profit, and expected a buxis into the bargain. There were other servants, such as Bheestie and Mheter, who only shewed themselves when a traveller departed, and then it was in the hopes of receiving also a present. These exorbitant charges and shameful treatment would not be allowed to continue in any other country but India. In that part of the world, no one interferes, complaints go unheeded, and so long as the revenue is improved, it matters little about the means adopted.

At each of these bungalows is a book kept, with date of arrival, amount paid, and remarks. This latter part is generally filled with facetiæ and grumblings. The first directed at the table-attendant, and the last with specimens of anger at the dirt, charges, and general imposition.

Having three days to amuse ourselves, we determined to be as comfortable as possible. The bungalow being full, we were obliged to hire a tent, which we pitched under the shadow of a tree within the Dak Bungalow Compound. For this (shade, I suppose), we had afterwards to pay at the rate of one rupee each per diem: total, eighteen shillings for three days. Poor extravagant subalterns, this is

how you throw your money away! Of course, all the sights of Allahabad were seen; the fort, with the splendid monolith, on which are letters even yet undeciphered. In the fort is an under-ground passage, the which we explored as far as possible, our way being disputed by bats, whose slumbers were disturbed by our entrance. The fort was like that of Calcutta, full of shot piled up in immense heaps, and guns laying in rows all over the square. The field-officer's quarters were very comfortable, overlooking the clear waters of the Jumna; but at this time, nobody, excepting an officer with a guard, resided in the fort. This officer and guard are relieved weekly from one of the Infantry regiments stationed in cantonments.

At last our daks were laid and ready; so having our already scanty purses considerably diminished by the heavy charges made for the use of the bungalow tree and attendance, we started towards our regiments, and after a day and night of jolting and smother arrived at Cawnpore.

The staging bungalow was full of travellers, so we sat all day in our palanquins, placing them on the shady side of the verandah; for this we were charged one rupee each. Strange that a government, governing so many people, and generally so liberal, could afford to risk its fair name for such a trifle. The thieves were so bad in this station, that a sharp look out was absolutely necessary on one's

boxes. Indeed, some brass pots tied on to my palkee had been cut away and stolen during the short portion of night remaining after our arrival. On complaining to the head of the police on the subject, I was informed that I ought to have hired chowkedars or watchmen, or in other words have paid black mail, as the chowkedars are all thieves.

This I was told was done by every one residing in Cawnpore. According to the size of the house occupied, so were the number of thief watchmen, greater or smaller, it was the only way to prevent being robbed. The expense of paying these fellows must be a serious item in the monthly expenditure of a poor subaltern. Griff, though I was, thinks I to myself, "there must be a screw loose somewhere, and the sooner the police and their masters are kicked out, the better."

Whilst waiting here for a few hours' rest, we received the news of our first meeting with the enemy at Moodkee. The account was from one of the papers, so we hoped that it was incorrect, and the victory more decided than it seemed to be. It appeared that our small force, escorting the Governor-General had been taken completely by surprise, and that (though it was well known that the enemy had crossed the river, and were entrenched somewhere not far off) we marched along as usual, and had been called from preparations for breakfast by the cry of the "Enemy are upon us."

We were hastily formed, and marched away to meet the enemy, who fought us well, within a very short distance of our camp. To this we returned after the battle, darkness setting in, and thus separating the combatants, both of whom claimed a victory. The victory, if such it could be called, was dearly purchased by many valuable lives.

"The enemy," the paper added, "are still in force near us, and most likely, ere this, have received the reward due to their temerity in thus invading our territories."

Among the slain, I observed an officer of my own regiment; and now that war had actually commenced, every moment's delay in my joining them, appeared to me to be vexatious; and anxiously did I hope to be with them before another action took place. In this I was disappointed, for on arriving at Meerut, an account came of another frightful battle, in which our army had done wonders, and taken almost all the guns of the enemy; but the victors were certainly in a worse plight than the vanquished, who had retreated at their ease to another position on the river. My regiment had again been severely handled, and was mentioned in high terms in the despatches. Among the killed was the Colonel, one Captain and a Subaltern, with three more wounded. It appeared that they, as well as the rest of the army engaged, had marched from Moodkee towards Ferozepore, being joined en route by a large force

under Sir John Littler, &c., &c. Their march was unopposed, and led for the first four miles over the field of Moodkee. On emerging from some jungle, they were met by a fearful fire of grape and round shot; the result of coming unexpectedly on the stoutly entrenched Sikhs. To charge these heavy guns, and to reply to them by our Horse Artillery six-pounders, was the work of an instant; and soon the battle became furious. Notwithstanding wonderful feats of valour performed by all arms, the cavalry charging up and into the enemies' entrenchments, yet all seemed useless, and men despaired of being able to drive the enemy from their position. All day had the deadly strife continued, and the short space intervening between us and the enemy, was strewed with dead and dying; the ground being literally red with blood, when night closed on the scene and the heavy firing became less strong. Again and again, did our brave fellows charge the guns that mowed them down by hundreds as they lay on the ground; only knowing their position by the direction of the shot, and the light of the fired piece, as it shone through the darkness of that miserably cold night. Morning broke, and the combat was ended, for the Sikhs had retired. Why, none could tell; but some said they feared a movement we made towards Ferozepore, was for the purpose of outflanking them, and therefore they withdrew, taking with them a force of cavalry. This was never once used, and

yet was sufficient to have swept every man of our force off the face of the earth. To this, succeeded days of miserable wet and cold; and as soon as practicable, the remnants of the British force moved away from Feroshah, and taking up a position near the Sikh army, in anxiety awaited the arrival of the Meerut force.

The accounts received of the agony endured by all, owing to thirst during this long combat, were dreadful to read. The wells, though full of dead bodies, were surrounded by men, half maddened with thirst and despair, anxious to obtain one mouthful of the blood-stained liquid. Here all distintcions of rank were lost, and officer and men could be seen scrambling for the envied prize.

On the retreat of the enemy, there were found in their camps and entrenchments some cart-loads of supplies, consisting of wine, brandy, beer, hams, and other things; the property of the mess of a Native Infantry Regiment. These carts had an officer placed over each, and their contents were distributed among the British Army; the Commander himself receiving a bottle of beer as his share. This opportune finding something fit to drink, was said by some, to have been the saving of many a man; and yet, it was not until a very long time afterwards—*years* I believe—that the gallant regiment were reimbursed for the loss; and that, not until a representation of the whole case was made in England.

No delay, longer than could be avoided, was allowed at Meerut, and we pushed on for Kurnaul, which, as we were detained some time, I had full leisure to observe.

The station had once been one of the largest cantonments up country; but proving unhealthy, owing to a canal being brought through it, the troops were taken away; and now all that remained to show its former state, was ruin—splendid houses, with the doors and windows taken out, and nearly unroofed—racket-court, theatre, and barracks, all tumbling down; indeed it appeared like a city of the dead, silent and almost deserted. A few European barrack women wandering about, who, being the wives and daughters of soldiers, had been left in depôts here, whilst their husbands and fathers were with their regiment on service. Poor women! they appeared to lead but a wretched life of it, and could be heard scolding each other from one end of the place to the other.

Soon after arrival, we went in search of the postmaster, in the hopes of his being able to lay our dawk on further; but this he told us was impossible, as, owing to the war, all the bearers had bolted; nor could he give us any assistance in finding our way onwards, simply stating "that he did not think it possible, that some had tried, but were forced to go back again," and adding for our comfort "that owing to the confusion incidental to war, many bad

characters were on the road, and robberies of daily occurrence." There was also another bit of news we received from him, which was to this effect: that officers were so much in request, that even griffs held a respectable position; and that the services of every available officer had been called for, and most of them were to join head-quarters at Government expense. The latter portion of the intelligence was of no interest to us, as we had to pay our own expenses; but the thing that now remained for us to do, was to leave Kurnaul and get on.

CHAPTER XVII.

On returning to the Dawk Bungalow we held a council, and had determined on leaving some of our small boxes, and palkees, under charge of the khidmutgar at the Staging Bungalow, purchasing a stout pony, on which was to be loaded a light pair of boxes, containing such clothes as we might require; and then, with the help of pony and our own legs, get over about twenty miles each day, until we reached our destination. The road being dangerous, and the country by no means free from the enemy, we determined on being well armed, and to keep away from the villages as much as possible.

These arrangements seemed perfect, and we prepared to put them into execution, when all plans were upset by the entry of the bungalow servant, who informed us "that if we required a servant to proceed upwards with us, there was a good man outside." This information was gladly received, and an order for the new servant's admittance was given.

The man's appearance was not in his favour; there was a hang-dog expression about his features that made me suspect him; but keeping my suspicions to myself, agreed with my companions, that it was absolutely necessary we should have somebody to interpret for us, for none of us could speak one word of the language. This seemed just the sort of fellow we required. His knowledge of English was sufficient for him to understand us, and to reply in a style of his own, not having any particular regard to pronunciation or grammar. He had another recommendation, which was generally agreed as being of doubtful advantage; viz: of being, as he called himself, "Very good christian man." Now, we had been long enough in the country, (and residence at Benares besides), to know that such natives as were christians, were not always of the best sort; but resorted to that religion, either for mercenary purposes, or because their own was tired of them. So his statement of being "a very good christian man" was doubted, and not considered indispensable to his becoming our servant.

A fourth was now added to our councils, in the person of the "Good Christian," who rejoiced in the name of Francis. Our plans were not his plans; and ere long, we agreed to his arrangements, which were these. "That the strong pony should, as first arranged, be purchased, and that along with the two light boxes we slung on each side, should go the Real

Christian; that our other boxes and palkees should be left in the godown of the Dawk Bungalow, where they would be under the charge of the house chowkedar, or watchman; and that finally, each of us should buy a pony, as this would enable us to go a greater distance each day." This was done at once, the Good Christian arranging everything; even to purchasing the ponies, which were good enough of their kind, and infinitely cheaper than the gallant Captain Haines would have parted with them.

The contents of the boxes on the pony were some spare papers, uniform (the full dress), barring the fire bucket, "epaulettes being always worn," so the Christian said, and warm clothing; outside was slung a tea-pot, kettle, frying pan, and cooking pot, the whole thing looking very business like—and on the second day from our arrival at Kurnaul we started. Famine, Trevor, and myself in front, mounted on our ponies, and dressed in red jackets, over these as the morning was very cold we placed our great coats. In a belt round our waists we placed pistols; and the Christian rode behind on the strong pony, perched high up above the boxes and cooking utensils, on a pile of blankets, which were intended for our use in the night time, kicking his animal along with his heels, and looking quite formidable with a trooper's great sword dangling at his side.

Travelling all day, brought us to some village about

thirty miles away from Kurnaul; and here we resolved to pass the night. So whilst the Christian caught the fowls, cut their throats, and cooked them; we bought corn and grass for the ponies, rubbing them down ourselves after the most approved style—depriving them of water until they were in a fit state to receive it; and by the time these things were finished, and the animals properly fastened up for the night, with bull dogs, (which, by the bye, I forgot to mention were also of our party), each owning one, chained to a tent peg near, we directed our steps to where bubble and savoury smell, told of dinner preparing. This was soon disposed of, and after some cheroots, and brandy and water, we turned into our blankets for the night; sleeping soundly, notwithstanding the hardness of our mattress, which was the mud floor of the Serai, or open square, with a tolerable shelter from the sun and rain—set apart in most villages and towns for the use of travellers.

An early breakfast, and we were again on the road, meeting many persons, who held out to us terrible views of the country we had yet to pass through. Indeed, from their accounts, it appeared quite a miracle how they had escaped being robbed or murdered by thieves and Sikhs. Concerning these latter, the wayfarers appeared in great dread, and declared most positively that they had in both battles had the best of the day; and were now only wait-

ing for reinforcements preparatory to taking Delhi, then Calcutta and London. This city they imagined was no great distance from Calcutta; their knowledge of geography leading them to suppose that the country which supplied so many white faces, could scarcely be any very great distance away.

Our evening's meal was improved by the addition of game which we shot along the road; and after the usual smoke, turned in and slept soundly. The next day's march led through villages; many of which were entirely deserted, nothing being left in them but hungry looking pariah dogs, who, emboldened by hunger, disputed the evening's meal with our bull dogs. These revenged themselves on one poor wretch by depriving him of life. From travellers we were led to suppose that from this our road was unsafe, and that we had better be on our guard. This we resolved to be; and in which purpose, it was agreed that each should watch for three hours while the others slept. This, with the bull dogs, was considered quite sufficient precaution.

The Real Christian was decidedly nervous, and more than once on the journey proposed a retreat; but this could never be thought of, so he was forced to accompany us. His alarm at the least sound in the jungle, through which our road lay, being too great to conceal.

The next day's march was a sad trial for his feelings, as we met nobody to tell how things were

going on in front, besides passing close to the road-side the bodies of two men, whose mangled forms showed their death had been violent. There being no village near, we passed the night under a tree; our poor horses only getting grass, which we managed to cut for them with our pocket knives; our food being game which we had shot on the road. As the brandy was finished, we took the cigars without; and two of the party turned in whilst the other and a bull dog kept watch. It was my turn for guard next, and I had been peering into the darkness for some two hours, when my canine companion commenced a low growl, which warned me of danger; I was on my feet in an instant, and seeing something moving in front, called out, "Who are you?" in Hindostani. At the same time awaking my companions; the voice disturbed the whole camp, and the dogs by their barking and tugging at their chains, showed they were ready for any fray. Not so the Christian, who, on the first alarm, bolted clean away from the whole party.

The reply to my "Kon hai," who are you? was given in a wild tremulous tone by a wretched-looking native, having a blanket over him; who, rushing up to me, and nearly into Tiger's mouth, began crying and saying, "Oh, Sahib! oh, Sahib!" and a great deal more, which we were unable to understand. Desiring him to be silent, and quieting the dogs, we searched for our interpreter, when, lo and behold,

he was not. So we did our best to comprehend the unexpected visitor without him. As far as we could understand, it appeared that he and three others had started that morning from Wudnee, (our next march), and proceeded several miles on the road when they were attacked by a band of Dacoits, who robbed and murdered his companions; he escaping in the confusion into the jungle, through which he wandered, trying to find the road to Kurnaul, which he had just succeeded in doing, when he was arrested by myself.

His story made us all determine to keep watch for the remainder of the night; which I am ashamed to say was very badly performed, for we continually nodded, whilst our visitor, feeling secure under our protection, slept soundly until day-break.

Towards morning, as I was half asleep and half awake I thought I heard a footstep, and called the dog's attention to it; (for he was sleepy, too.) His growl, prolonged and low, told me I was right; and as the light became a little more distinct, I recognized, creeping towards us, no one less than our own servant, the Real Christian; who hearing the dogs growl, felt reassured, and confident that the whole party had not been murdered.

An early breakfast was cooked and eaten; and after that, the Christian well thrashed by Trevor, for bolting away at the alarm. (It being a bitterly cold morning, Trevor declared the thrashing, besides

doing the man good for the future and keeping him warm, would be acceptable to one so much in error.) All being arranged, and the visitor of the previous evening taken along with us, (for fear his story should be untrue, and he only a spy), we started for Wudnee, where we were informed there was a fort garrisoned by our troops, under the command of a couple of officers.

This turned out to be true, and as we arrived there towards sunset, glad was I to observe the old red uniform once again, as it dotted the walls here and there, in the shape of sentries. These walls appeared strong, and the fort well built. Indeed, I was informed that the Sikh garrison formerly holding it, considered themselves strong enough to refuse to surrender, when summoned to do so by the officer commanding the force and escort of the Governor-General.

Whilst we were taking a small survey of this fort, we heard a voice addressing us in English, (it being bawled out from the top of the gateway), with "Hey, you fellows, what do you want here?" On our stating in reply, "that we were proceeding to join our regiment, and came to this place to stop," the officer descending from his lofty position, came to the gateway and insisted on our dining with him, and sleeping there; telling us at the same time to bring our horses and traps inside. As these latter only consisted of Francis and his pony, there was

not much difficulty in complying with his request. The advent of this strange-looking creature, with his big sword and pile of blankets, appeared to afford amusement to the whole garrison.

The remarks made by the men, I could not understand; but imagined from the troubled look of the Christian, and the hurried way in which he threw himself from off his Bucephalus, that they were of a satirical nature and more personal than pleasant. His reply to the officer, (who asked him sundry questions of a facetious kind, having reference to the age of his sisters, and the value of himself with some of the hair and dirt off his face); were at first a grin, and then an acknowledgment of his ignorance of "what master mean, but be very good christian." With this we left him, and proceeded to the square in the centre of the fort; in which were pitched the tents of the officers and men.

Here the invitation to stay was renewed by Captain Taffy, commanding the two companies in garrison; and as there was yet some time till dinner, we lit our cheroots, and over a most welcome tumbler of brandy and water, listened to the big Ensign's lament at their being left behind in this dull, deadly-lively place, as he called the fort.

To our question, as to whether "There was any opposition offered in obtaining this same fort," he replied, "Oh yes, tremendous, such a garrison, if you had only seen the six half-starved, indecently

attired niggers we captured in it; and afterwards placed on the edge of that pond outside, under charge of two great fellows of the 9th Lancers with drawn swords; wouldn't you have been frightened? Why, this fort raised no end of hopes, and now, here is the end of it. I am stuck here, with that veteran officer yonder," pointing to the Commandant. "My amusement is smoking, which also is his; and my employ grinding round those blessed walls; which duty the veteran officer also performs, adding thereto, that of collecting all the reports about these Sikhs."

"How raised hopes?" I inquired.

"How?" he answered, "why thus; as we were coming along the march to this place, we were told that there was a fort chuck full of Sikhs, all of whom intended dying before surrendering, and all these we were to kill. Each man felt the edge of his regulation spit, and came to the conclusion that it was not worth a rap. Well, Sir, the cavalry all kept close together, the artillery took up their position, and the infantry were put in first rate order and kept at wheeling distance. Soon the fort came in sight, and then we were saluted by a Sergeant and his guard, who had gone on over night to get supplies. These had already captured the fort, and robbed us of our laurels. All we found on arrival were these six scare-crows, who had resigned themselves up to the aforesaid Sergeant. In the pond

was a goose swimming about, which was transferred from his element to the cooking-pot by six great Lancers, who after their duty was done, stripped and went in after him. Inside we have found a few rupees buried, which have been kept for the government, and a cow, which has been taken possession of by the gallant Captain there, and supplies the milk. There now," he added "you know all about it, wash your hands and come to dinner."

After our frugal way of life, the roast leg of mutton with quail and snipe, the result of the Captain's sport outside the walls, on the previous day, appeared frightful luxury, and we enjoyed our dinner, as much as hungry men could. Beer and brandy were rather novelties to us, so we gave those also a share of our attention, both at and after dinner. There was some laughter at our mode of travelling; and suspicions raised about the honesty of the Christian, who evidently had not made a favourable impression on our hosts. That he had hitherto stuck to us, was not by them considered as any proof of his faithfulness, as after the first thirty miles from Kurnaul, it was safer for him to keep with us than return alone; and the further we proceeded, the better this argument held good, for they both assured us that ever since the battle of Moodkee, the road had been very unsafe, and murders pretty common.

News they gave us of the force which, after the

battle of Ferozeshah, had proceeded a little distance nearer the river, and were watching the enemy, with whom another general action was expected so soon as the siege train should arrive from Delhi. As there was no chance of an action occurring until the siege train arrived, we determined to take advantage of the liberality of our hosts, resting ourselves and jaded ponies, and remained as their guests yet another day.

Having obtained the use of charpoys, or light wooden bedsteads from the village, which flourished under the protection afforded by the fort, we made a long night of it under canvass, and did not awake until the big Ensign coming to the tent-door, demanded "whether we intended snoring there or coming to breakfast?"

This was finished. The Commandant went to his dispatches, as the big Ensign facetiously termed the daily report writing, and we to cigars and pipes with the subaltern, who amongst other information—told us, the general opinion was, "we were surprised at Moodkee, and jolly well thrashed at Ferozeshah," and from what I heard from better authority at a subsequent period, feel convinced that such was the case

The day was rather dull, as we were confined to the walls, inside which, there was nothing deserving notice; however, between pipes innumerable, and listening to our hosts' grumblings, at being left

behind, we managed to find dinner time come at last.

We started early next morning for Ferozeshah, having bid our hosts good bye the night before, with many thanks for their kindness and hospitality.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We kept a sharp look out all round for Sikhs, as we were told some few were still hovering in the neighbourhood; but luckily met no one. The whole place appeared deserted, every village we came to was empty; the entrance to the narrow streets being blocked up with piles of thorny bushes. The air of complete desolation all round, told of some dreadful calamity.

About mid-day we came to the village of Moodkee, in front of which the battle had been fought. The evidences of battle soon shewed themselves. Lying at the side of the road, were the remains of a tumbril, which by its burnt appearance must have been blown up. Not far from this lay the bodies of camels and horses, all in a state of putrefaction, from off which staggered vultures, and other birds of prey, gorged with their frightful banquet. As we advanced, the sights became more dreadful. Under a tree to which was nailed a plate of tin, were buried the bodies of three officers and a sergeant;

their names were stamped on this tin plate, or rather the tin plate had their names perforated on it.

Here, just in, and yet almost out of the jungle, were six horses and several human bodies; shewing the effect of a discharge of grape on a Horse Artillery gun. In every bush were bodies, some European, some native, all naked and in a state of putrefaction; the smell from these was fearful.

Then further on, where the country was clearer, and where the fate of the day had been decided, were numbers of bodies; a few Europeans, and the rest Sikhs and Akalies. These last were almost covered, as with a cloak, by their long hair. Right and left, the ground was broken, from which protruded arms, legs, and ghastly faces; these were the hastily buried dead, thrown promiscuously into shallow pits, dug for the purpose. Dead horses, and dead men covered the ground as far as the eye could see; tearing at which were hideous vultures, so gorged that they could hardly move Sharing this horrible meal, were pariah dogs, who growled, snapped, and fought with each other, over the mangled remains of God's image. As we proceeded onwards towards the other position taken up by the Sikhs at Feroze-shah, the bodies were less frequent; generally that of an Englishman stripped and mutilated. Some remnant of clothing, perhaps left on him, shewed that he had belonged to the gallant 3rd Dragoons. Brave fellows, so far as this from where the battle

had been fought, proved how some, led away by the desire of revenge and glory, had followed the retreating enemy too far, and added yet another victim to that monster war.

Making our way through the low jungle, on to our resting place for the night; we were suddenly clear of all cover, and immediately found ourseles surrounded by the dead. In front of us was the Sikh position of Ferozeshah, and scattered round were dead; not singly, or in twos or threes as at Moodkee, but in heaps. As they died under the deadly grape, so they lay; all were stripped, and at Moodkee, were now the food for vultures and dogs.

The enemy's entrenchments had served as graves for some of our brave fellows; but the mud thrown over, was not sufficient to conceal the fact, and many bodies once buried, were now quite exposed.

As far as we could make out, it appeared that the position chosen by the Sikhs, was only strong from the immense number of guns placed in it. To their right was broken ground and low jungle; to their left, the road to Ferozepore; and to their rear a small village.

The road to Ferozepore led immediately close to their left; but as it was only the marks of wheels which constituted it a road, there was no particular necessity for our artillery going so close to the enemy's entrenchments, for the country beyond was open and flat as a pancake. This road, however, saved us; for some of our troops retiring by it on

Ferozepore, made the Sikhs fancy they were going to be attacked in rear by the Meerut force, which they believed had come up. So away they went to the river, taking their immense force of cavalry with them, and leaving their guns in our hands, as they were too heavy to move. Moreover, some of them had been spiked by our gallant fellows, whose mangled bodies, now lying in front and inside the half levelled entrenchments, shewed how deadly had been the strife, and how resolute were the defenders.

We decided on halting for the night at a village about four miles from the field, where we arrived at sunset, with very little appetite for dinner, the sickening sights of the day's march being too vivid to be effaced. The Real Christian had been silent all day, and appeared frightfully nervous at the idea of coming across the perpetrators of these horrid deeds. His advice was taken, as regarded sleeping in a solitary hut near the village, and shewing only just sufficient fire to cook with.

The dogs were tied round this hut, and, after pipes and brandy, (which had been given us by our hosts of the previous evening), we wrapped our blankets round, and slept.

It was resolved that the Christian should take the first three hours' watch (he having asked to do so), and we being sure he would keep awake, well knowing he was far too much frightened to go to sleep. As my eyes gradually closed in sleep, the Real Christian

became more and more shadowy as he sat at the tent door, patting Tiger's head, and muttering something like prayers to him. At last, I was in the land of dreams, and once again at home, a pupil of the tyrant Lewis. I was not sorry to be awoke, by the now sleepy Francis, telling me to get up and take my spell on guard.

Nothing occurred to break the extreme stillness of the night, and soon after daybreak, the ponies being mounted, and the Christian firmly fixed on his blankets, we pushed along for our regiments; it having been agreed that Francis should, on arrival in camp, bring the pony and himself to where my regiment was, and from that proceed to the others.

Soon, the road became more frequented, and Sepoys were met, escorting carts laden with supplies for the army; and finding, on inquiry, that the head-quarters were but a few miles further on, we put spurs to our steeds and cantered along, telling the Real Christian to inquire for the whereabouts of my regiment, and make all haste and follow.

It was with no little difficulty that we found our respective regiments, as we could not tell to what division or brigade they belonged; and to our inquiries as to their whereabouts, the answer was invariably another question, as to what division or to what brigade they were attached. However, at last, all was as we wished, and I found myself in front of the mess-tent 76th Regiment, Native Infantry.

CHAPTER XIX.

THERE were numerous officers sauntering about the camp, and crossing over from one tent to the other. But my arrival did not appear to be noticed, or they were too much accustomed to see strange faces in camp, to pay any particular attention to one stopping near their mess-tent. At length I determined on introducing myself to an officer, who I perceived at the next tent very busy in sketching a group of camels and Sepoys.

On my stating my name and errand, he put away his drawing and said, "Oh, Villars, the new griff; very glad to see you; come along with me to Ewart's tent, he's our Adjutant. Hey, you nigger, (this was addressed to some sleepy native dozing under the awning of the tent). Sahib ke ghora lo. (Take the gentleman's horse.) I will introduce you to him; and a regular brick you will find him." Then leading the way across the camp street to the opposite tent, he began shouting loud

enough to be heard half over the camp, "I say, Joe, here is Mr. Villars come to join." The reply was the appearance of the Adjutant himself, who shaking me warmly by the hand congratulated me on having arrived safely, and asked several questions regarding our manner of travelling, &c., &c., after leaving Kurnaul.

The description of our hardships and mode of life on the road afforded much amusement, not only to the Adjutant, but to the other officers, most of whom had strolled into the tent and to whom I was in due form introduced. They appeared to me a capital set of fellows, with whom it would be my own fault if I did not manage to get on.

After some chatting, Ewart, the Adjutant, proposed accompanying me to the Colonel's, saying, "I think now he is the only officer present with the regiment, whom you have not seen."

"And the less you see of him the better I think," said one.

"I know," said another, "that the more one sees of him, the less one likes him."

"The cross-grained brute!" said a fine, tall, young fellow, considerably over six feet; "he is like a porcupine, all spikes; and go at him any way you like, you are sure to come worst off. He is as fretful, too; all bluster and bully; 'tis my private opinion that he is as ignorant as ugly, only hides his ignorance under a great deal of blustering."

"Please goodness," added the Doctor, "the next action we go in, he will be polished off."

"I say, Doctor," said another, "can't you do it and save the Sikhs the trouble. The brother to that infernal black stuff, you so kindly sent over to my tent the other day, would do the job most effectually, I'm sure, and joy go with him, say I."

"Come, gentlemen," said the Adjutant, "draw it mild. Mr. Villars, are you ready?" Thus saying, away we went across the street to a large tent, opposite to the door of which was placed a small Union Jack, which served to show that it was the tent of the commanding officer.

Colonel Johnson was a thin, wretched, yellow and ill-tempered looking man. His voice was disagreeable, and his manner of addressing any his inferior, harsh and dictatorial; but when speaking to a superior, just the reverse, cringing and servile.

Our stay with him was short, but long enough for me to see he was a disagreeable personage. He informed the Adjutant, that at the morning's parade, the men were not clean, and that he would have another parade this evening; but this was said with more curses than I choose to record.

We went from the Colonel's to the mess, for tiffin; and there his actions were the general subject of conversation.

"Well, Mr. Villars," said the tall, young fellow who had before, in the Adjutant's tent, spoken his

mind pretty freely regarding the Colonel's ignorance; "what do you think of Old Blowhard? that's the name he goes by; he's a gentlemanly sort of a fellow, isn't he? a sort of man you would like to be seen with in Regent Street, and introduce to your mother and sisters as a particular friend, eh?"

These questions being too numerous to answer, I contented myself with saying, that "I had not time to judge; but certainly thought his manner was rude and disagreeable."

"Oh," said Elliot, (for so the tall man was called), "before you've done with him, you'll have lots of opportunities of judging, without we have the luck to find him, as the sawbones says, 'polished off' in the next scrimmage. But a man that's born to be hung, can't be drowned or shot either. There's a look of an escaped convict about his countenance that tells me he will yet obtain his deserts, and play, like Paganini, on a single string in front of the Old Bailey. Well, I'll take my furlough when that occurs, and go and look."

"Stay, Elliot!" shouted a voice from the end of the table. "Just fancy, Blowhard has ordered another parade this evening, as he swears the belts were not clean this morning, to use his nice language, 'By G—d, I'll have their belts white as snow, new leather or old leather, camp or cantonments.' Pleasant, Giant, isn't it, this tomfoolery? when the whole regiment is harassed with picket and

other duties, and may at any time be called into action."

A general chorus of abuse followed, and then each man departed to put on his uniform, and be in readiness with his company to receive the commanding officer, and listen, with what calmness he could, to remarks on the enormity of having a breastplate the tenth of an inch from its proper position; or to hear a man of first rate character and steadiness, abused like a pickpocket and punished very severely, for allowing a small particle of the white mixture on his belts to come on his red coat.

Left alone in the large tent, I thought over past life, and the one now before me. Here was I, still but a boy, and yet holding a fair position in the world. It seemed but the other day that I was poaching in Delamere Forest, or reading with my tutor in town; and now, I was thousands of miles away, in a strange country, with language, manners, and almost everything equally strange; yet had I found my way from one end to the other, and now here I was, commencing a soldier's life, with the enemy scarcely two miles away, and with whom we might any day come in collision. Then would wandering fancy roam to a gallant deed done on the battle field, or for a moment across this bright mirror of fancy, would come a breath of falling in the first affair, and hopes and life together vanish.

The whole was pleasant enough to review. But

the reverse of the picture was, a life spent at regimental duty under Colonel Johnson, bullied and ill-treated, with no remedy but patience, for I saw by the unwilling obedience given to his commands, that he was all powerful; and by the expressions of so many of my seniors, that the Colonel was most ungentlemanly and overbearing.

Whatever his conduct to me might be, I determined on trying to avoid giving offence. To be as little annoyed as possible by anything he might say or do, and to be agreeable to my brother officers; falling back on the hope, which appeared to be shared in common by the whole regiment, viz: that Old Blowhard might receive his quietus in the next engagement.

My reverie was disturbed by the return from parade of the officers, and the preparations for dinner. Through their assistance I made every inquiry about the arrival of Francis, but could obtain no information. But as it was not unlikely that he had been detained some time in finding my regiment, or had stayed at Trevor's or Famine's without coming to me, I did not think much of his non-arrival.

At dinner the Colonel was present, so it passed off but slowly. The absence of Elliot and three other officers led me to inquire the reason, and found it was their turn with two companies for picket; so directly after parade, these companies, in all the

beauty of white belts and pipe clay, marched away to the front, neither officers or men having any tents or bedding. As it was a wretched cold night with drizzly rain, they must have had a miserable time of it, and were glad enough when relieved by a party of similar strength from another regiment on the next night.

On these occasions, the officers generally took a goodly supply of tobacco and brandy, with biscuits, trusting to their servant bringing something in the way of meat from the mess. The men took their own provisions with them, a few being allowed to cook, whilst the remainder stood sentry or sat on the ground, hoping for night and their relief. My things not arriving, I obtained a shake down on the mess table, bedding being made up for me from general contributions.

Next day, after breakfast, I received a visit from Famine, who came to make inquiries about Francis, who it appeared, had not been seen by him or Trevor, with whom he had just before had a conversation.

Under these circumstances, we resolved no longer to delay making a search and strict inquiries. The idea having flashed across our minds, that our truly good Christian was no better than he should be, and had bolted. For this purpose, with the advice of the interpreter of my corps, we wrote to the chief magistrate, and had a description of him, pony, and

boxes, cried in each bazaar, but all to no purpose. The Christian never turned up, or have I up to this time, been able to discover what became of him, or our things either.

As far as we could judge, it seemed that the fellow must have been in league with the servant, (chowkedar) of the Staging Bungalow at Kurnaul, and thus got him to take charge of our palanquins and heavy boxes, which were never more heard of; whilst he, the "Real Christian and very good man," accompanied us with a very good strong pony—epaulettes, because always worn and worth money, and warm clothing because valuable, both as regarded price and comfort, for the mere purpose of stealing all if he could. His coming so close to the camp was after all but a blind to us, as he could never have ventured back alone, after leaving Kurnaul. Moreover, we kept too sharp a look out for him even to get away; and now, what was easier for the scoundrel than, instead of coming into camp, to turn off, and take the road to Ferozepore, which was but a short distance away. However, all was conjecture, as nothing more was ever heard of him, and I suppose it never will be. He, no doubt, keeping his christianity less prominent, and chuckling quietly, as he thinks how well he succeeded in gulling three jolly griffs.

To these same jolly griffs the loss was a serious matter, and though immediate wants were most

liberally and willingly satisfied by brother officers, yet the loss of a whole outfit was hard to bear, and told more at a later period than it did just at the time of its occurrence.

CHAPTER XX.

From a long conversation with Famine, I discovered that he was not altogether pleased with his regiment; or did he think a longer stay would tend to his feeling more favourably disposed towards its officers. Under these circumstances, I strongly advised his effecting an exchange into my own, as his doing so would be to our mutual advantage. To his, more particularly, as owing to the severe actions of Moodkee and Ferozeshah, there were four vacancies, and he would, by an early application, be able to join the 76th as Second Ensign.

This we agreed to go and ask the Adjutant about, who strongly advocated the exchange being made; at the same time informed Famine how the same was to be effected. A few days after this conversation, Douglas, or as I shall continue to call him, Famine, was posted to my regiment; and clubbing our small stock of money together, we purchased a small tent and other necessaries, and became quite set up and comfortable. Not but what I had been

nearly so from the first hour of my joining, as the Adjutant gave me the use of half his tent, and contributions of clothing came in so quickly, as to oblige me to beg a trunk to put all in.

One day we were sitting in the tent, waiting until it should be time to dress for evening parade, when Famine rather abruptly stopped me in something I was saying, and said, "Do you know the reason why I refused to subscribe to the race-meeting—the papers for which were sent round at tiffin to-day?"

"No," I replied, "but perhaps you think races wicked."

"No," he answered, "I like them, and would willingly give my little towards fun of any sort; but what with the loss of my traps, mess expenses, and having to pay thirty pounds a year home, I did not think myself justified in giving anything."

"Well," I said, "you know best; but what is the thirty pounds sent home for?"

After making me promise secrecy, he told me the following tale, which I give in his own words.

"The thirty pound a year is not for any foolish debt contracted by myself before leaving England; but is the amount I promised to give yearly to my father, until the debt incurred by him, on account of my outfit, shall be liquidated; for he had to borrow the necessary money."

"How so poor?" I asked.

"Oh 'tis a sad story, and one that I fear will have but little interest for you. But if you like to listen, I will tell all, and rely on your promise of secrecy for its going no further. So tell me when you are tired, and I will stop," thus saying, Douglas proceeded.

"My father was the youngest of three sons, his two elder brothers being sufficiently well off to do nothing; but with him, it was a different matter, there being no provision for the youngest child. He was educated for college, and in due time sent there, with the understanding, that as soon as in orders, a small family living was to be his. However, this never came into his hands, but was given to some distant cousin by my grandfather, when his son's marriage at Cambridge, to a beautiful but penniless daughter of a clergyman, was announced.

"Soon after the marriage, my father obtained a curacy in the small village of Nares in Devonshire. The income from this source was but seventy pound per annum; but another hundred might be added, as the price received during the year from contributions to magazines and periodicals.

"This sum did pretty well for the first two or three years, but when children came quickly and the money did not increase in proportion, then did poverty begin to show itself. The simple mode of life, was made if possible more simple, and everything that could be in any way construed into a

luxury was cheerfully resigned. The letters written to my grandfather were not even answered, and soon, what little hope there might have been of assistance from that quarter, was dispelled by my grandfather's death being announced, and in the will, no mention of my father. It was not much disappointment, as from the previous conduct of the old gentleman, little else was to be expected; so little was said or thought about it. My father toiled on up the hill of life, beloved by all his parish; most of whom were as poor as their minister, and felt for him and his angel wife, whose kind voice and heart, were ever ready to sooth the sorrow of the sick bed. Often, indeed, was the little dainty made for some sick parishioner by her own hands over the wood fire in the parsonage, when the price of it would entail the use of the faded or far worn dress for yet another month.

"The village of Nares was in the northern county, situated among bleak barren hills, with here and there a small valley cut by some brook, as it rushed and foamed towards the sea. On the banks of these streams grew the only trees, and these were but stunted, owing to the small amount of surface soil from which nourishment could be obtained.

"The few houses composing the village were scattered here and there among these trees, and were built chiefly with a view of being let in lodgings to visitors, who were not infrequent tenants during

the summer months. Fresh air and sea-bathing, being the only claim so wild and barren a part of England could have on public notice.

"These visitors seldom were known to us. They were birds of passage, and it was not worth their while adding the name of the poor curate to an already over burthened list of acquaintances. With one, indeed, we had become intimate; he having first become known to us by his goodness to the surrounding poor, and occasional treats of half-pence and lollipops to myself and younger sisters.

"Sometimes he would spend the evening with us, and plans were made for long walks on the morrow to see some sick person; the little basket containing warm clothing or dainties being carried by myself, or sisters, for servants we had but one. Mr. Lenon, for so our acquaintance was called, had been recommended sea-bathing, and was induced to come to Nares for this purpose. The air and exercise did the required good, and ere the last leaves had fallen from the trees, Mr. Lenon, or "the good gentleman," as he was generally termed, had returned to Staffordshire, in which county he possessed some landed property, renovated in health, and regretted by all the poor in Nares. His loss, particularly at this season of the year, was felt by the poor a good deal; but by none more so than at the parsonage. The long winter evenings felt doubly long, now "the good gentleman" had gone.

And often as we all set round the cheerful wood fire, did we talk of our absent friend and wonder all about him. We felt his departure in more ways than one, for, owing to his liberality, our table had been better spread than formerly, and many a little present given. Now again, was the system of pinching and retrenching manifest, and money was scarce indeed. Things went on in this way for two years more, when one day the postman brought a letter from Mr. Lenon, which after reading, my father handed over to his wife, at the same time saying, 'well, dear, you decide.'

"The letter, after stating 'how often memory ran back to the time spent at Nares,' continued to say, "that there was now vacant the living of Glenmare, the presentation to which was in his gift. This he now offered to Mr. Douglas, and hoped he would accept it, and thereby allow him to show how grateful he was for the kindness received when an invalid at Nares. The income,' he added, 'is but little, only £250 from all sources, but the neighbourhood is good, and the parishioners such as would fully appreciate the good qualities of yourself and Mrs. Douglas.'

"The offer was, of course, gladly accepted; and ere long, we bid good bye to Nares, being attended to the coach by each person in the parish, many of whom were not ashamed to weep at the loss of their kind old minister and best friend.

"Things now improved, and I was sent to school, where, as I think I told the men at Benares, I was licked a good deal, and learnt a good deal. Then came my commission in this service, which has cost a large sum of money, greater part of which had to be borrowed by my father. This money, I consider as being my duty to restore, and, therefore, promised to remit yearly thirty pounds, and as that cannot be done out of an ensign's pay without the greatest difficulty I have determined on avoiding the slightest unnecessary expense, and act accordingly. I am," he continued, "his only son, and know he is proud of me; so it would, indeed, be a shame to disappoint his hopes and expectations. Now, if at any future time, the other officers think me stingy, or unwilling to join in certain expenses, you can put in a good word for me, and yet keep my secret. I feel," he added, "I can get on here, and may yet, some day, render glad the hearts of those whose love for me is only equalled by mine for them."

I had, after hearing this account of his family, a higher opinion of young Douglas than ever, and resolved to befriend him in any way it should be possible.

A few days after this, I had my first taste of picket duty, and was not sorry when relieved on the following night. We started in the dark, taking with us a blanket each, and then were stationed about a mile in front of the camp. After seeing

sentries properly posted, we, *i.e.*, the Captain, myself, and Douglas, smoked and shivered until it was time for one of us to start for the rounds, and then the other two, wrapping their blankets round them, lay on the damp ground, doing their best to sleep, as well as the drizzling rain would permit.

I was not sorry when the sun rose, and looked forward to the hour of nine, having some hopes that, by that time, something eatable might be sent; and, likewise, that the sun would have heat enough to dry and warm one. However, it was past twelve before a servant brought us anything, and not until very late before we were relieved. As to the enemy, we were not interfered with by them. At night we saw their fires, and in the day-time some of their videttes would come near enough to take a shot and give one in return, but at such distances as to preclude any very serious consequences.

After this, the enemy became bolder, and our pickets and theirs were frequently having shots at each other. They (the enemy) had thrown across the river pickets of large size, and had supported them by guns of a goodly weight, besides a few regiments of cavalry and infantry. To drive these back again was determined upon, and for this purpose, the division to which my regiment was attached, with a considerable force of cavalry and artillery was ordered to the front.

The first part of the road was over ploughed fields

and heavy sand, with here and there stunted trees and low jungle, through which, as we toiled, the hares and partridges being disturbed, went away by scores. As we came nearer the Sikh position, so did their fire increase, until at last, we were ordered to halt, whilst our guns, proceeding to the front, endeavoured to silence those of the enemy. The shot intended for our guns, came over them and into us, killing one man. So we moved more to the right, and were ordered to lie flat down. This we did, and amused ourselves with watching the shot coming, either right over and several hundred yards to our rear, or into the brushwood cover near, from which they broke with a succession of bounds and hops, more like rabbits breaking from underwood than anything I can describe. Sometimes they would ricochet to where we lay, when, instantly, those men lying in the threatened direction, would jump up and make way for the unwelcome guest. The Sikhs fired some shells at us, but they all burst up in the air, and did no damage.

We had been lying this way for some time, wondering what next was going to be done; a staff-officer had come and gone again; the cavalry had moved up a little on our flank, and reports were going about that a general action was going to be forced upon the Sikhs, when the Commander, attended by a numerous staff, passed down in front of the infantry, and drew down a famous salute, the effects of which instead of

coming near those for whom it was intended, were visited on the unfortunate cavalry and ourselves. A round shot having come in among our men and killing one, wounded another.

Night coming on, we were ordered to retrace our steps homewards, which we did, arriving in camp very late, and very much mystified as to what our object in going down was; and also very much in doubt as to whether that or any other object had been attained.

This was the first shot I had ever seen fired in earnest, and own I did not much like it. There was nothing exciting in it; there were we, at an immense distance, getting pounded, without being able to see our pounders, or return the compliment. It was, moreover, stupid work, and appeared to me to be for no earthly purpose, and I was glad enough when ordered to retire.

The next day, two companies from my regiment were ordered on picket under Lieutenant Blake; who not liking the companionship of his subaltern, asked me to come with him, dine, and stay till late. This I declined, having no fondness for a meal of cold greasy meat on the ground, when I could get it comfortably in the mess-tent. However, I was persuaded into going with him for a couple of hours, bringing with me from the mess some mutton chops, and a bottle of claret, which was to be mulled and drank.

We had arrived at our ground. The sentries

were posted, and the Sikhs were all safe some distance off, when we began our preparations for mulled claret. It was about nine o'clock, and our fire—which had been lit with great difficulty from bits of straw, paper, and wood carried by us from camp, (and still more carefully hidden from view either of the enemy or the main body, by blankets fixed on muskets)—began to burn brightly, and became fit to receive a cooking pot, into which the claret was poured. The cloves were put in, and all was ready for drinking, when a sentry on the right, giving the alarm, fired. This was succeeded by another, and another, until volleys were being fired all round camp. In our hurry to let the men have the three or four muskets supporting the fire screen, the claret upset, and with a hiss and a smother, the fire was extinguished. Still the firing continued, and the rattle of scabbards and movement of cavalry could be distinctly heard. Then it struck me that I was in my wrong place, and could have no possible business at picket; but ought to be with my regiment in the rear, the bugles of which force I could hear most distinctly ringing out "the assembly."

In this dilemma, I appealed to Blake, who was swearing pretty roundly at the row and darkness, which prevented him making out anything.

"Arrah," answered he with a glorious brogue. "I think you'd better be after making the best of your way back again. By the piper that played

before Moses—but I wish I knew what to do myself. Holloa, there!" roared he, "you sentries, what the devil are you firing at? I do believe these divils of Saikes are in my rare. Any how, Villars, you had better try and join the regiment." Thus saying, he departed one way, towards the sentries, whilst I made the best of my way back to camp, the fires of which marked their position most distinctly.

The noise, confusion, and firing still continued, and near me I could distinctly recognize the clattering of sabres and horses' hoofs. Thinking these must be a party of the enemy, who had succeeded in getting behind our pickets, made my movements tolerably rapid, and I fairly ran for it.

As I neared the camp, two mud walls, which I had noticed before as I went to picket, came in sight. The thought of how to get over them, flashed for an instant across my mind, and then the louder clattering behind, determined me to try and jump. At it I came full speed, and hitting about a foot from the top, rolled head over heels into the broken ground on the other side. This was no time to think of bruises, more particularly with an enemy in the rear and the "assembly" being sounded, so up I jumped, and peered hard at the next wall, determining to calculate my distance better, as it rose stiff and indistinct in the dark night. A rush, a spring, and another roll, cutting knees and hands, and leaving a very fair cast of my features in the clayey soil on the

other side. From this to the main body was but a short distance. On joining, I found the force getting under arms, so sneaked into my place unnoticed; and there stood for an hour or more, mentally determining never again to visit a friend on picket, not even with mulled claret as an inducement.

Here we stood waiting in the cold for about an hour, and then were dismissed; it having proved a false alarm, orignating from a nervous sentry hearing some talking near him, and his challenge not being answered. His firing was the signal for the next man to do so also, until the firing became general. This was principally directed against a patrol of Irregular Cavalry, who, finding a disagreeable reception from their own side, made the best of their way out of it; and thus accounted for the clattering of hoofs and sabres.

I had just turned into bed, and had been asleep about two hours when the same scene occurred again. Out was turned the whole camp and stood to arms, this time for two hours; when it was discovered that the alarm was caused by a grey donkey rushing by a sentry and not answering, he was fired upon, and hit, too; but this was not known until daylight.

The enemy having brought further supplies of men and artillery across the river, it was determined that our division should again go at them. For this purpose we started off after tiffin, and amused our-

selves with banging away at each other until dark, when we returned as before, very much wondering what good we had done, or what we were expected to do. On our side there were only a few hurt, two of whom were injured by the bursting of a gun, which being close to where we were stationed, covered me with sand and powder; but did no injury to any one of ours, though an unfortunate artillery-man was killed. Report said, that it burst through orders being given to "put more powdher in, and make it go further—sure these Saikes make their's come to us."

A short time after this the whole force made a move nearer the river, and we found ourselves facing the enemy, who could be seen as busy as bees throwing up entrenchments. This we did also, the charge of the left portion of our works being given over to my regiment; inside this entrenchment two companies of ours were always stationed. It had been a village, and now all the huts were levelled excepting one, which loop-hooled and strengthened, served as quarters for the officers. The roof of it was used as a rendezvous for all the idlers in camp; who, telescopes in hand, viewed from thence the operations of the enemy.

In front of us, right and left, were two small villages; the huts of which had also been levelled, leaving one for the same purpose as that before mentioned. Slight earthworks were thrown round

these villages, and the duties there were taken by our brigade.

From these, we could distinctly see every movement of the enemy, and amused ourselves with potting at each other, but seldom doing any injury. These outposts were never held at night, but were always reoccupied before daybreak. Of this, however, the enemy were ignorant.

The day before we parted with them, I had been on duty with Captain Dawson in the one fronting our position, and it was noticed that the enemy advanced much nearer than usual; the firing was also better directed, so much so as to render it necessary to keep oneself pretty well out of sight. Two Sepoys had been wounded, and there was every appearance of a scrimmage for the position, which was to be resigned in the event of a large force attacking.

Night came on, and we crept back to the division as usual; and next morning on another party going down for the purpose of taking their spell there, they found it already occupied by the enemy, so they made a short cut back again, uninjured.

The Sikhs must have entered soon after we quitted, and were no doubt very much astonished to find the position deserted.

CHAPTER XXI.

NEXT morning the look-out place was more crowded than usual, and many a telescope was directed towards our old out-post now swarming with Sikhs. Whilst we were observing their movements, a Sergeant of Sappers, not knowing of the change, rode from where we were right in among them, and was not aware of his mistake until he found the bridle of his pony seized by a great hairy ruffian of a Sikh. The next instant, the said hairy gentleman received over his arm a heavy blow from the Sergeant's stout walking stick, which had the effect of making him drop his hold. Then putting heels and stick well into the pony, away the Sergeant galloped back again to us. Volley after volley was fired at him as he retreated, but neither horse nor man were touched; both arrived safely amid the cheers of all the lookers on. Pony and man were considered quite heroes for some time after.

Alliwal was fought, as also was Buddewal. In the first of which we gained a victory, and in the

second were surprised, defeated, and lost our baggage.

Whilst these things were being done, we at headquarters amused ourselves with potting at the enemy, and waiting for the siege train to arrive from Delhi. This delay was not wasted by the enemy, who employed each hour and minute in strengthening their position. On the plain in front of their works, and indeed almost under our guns, they were daily exercising their troops, burning priming, &c., &c. From us they received no molestation, or we from them; but the two large armies of about thirty thousand men each, for the space of six weeks, satisfied themselves with watching each other's movements and strengthening positions.

Across the river, running to their rear, the Sikhs had thrown an excellent bridge of boats, and each day showed the entrenchment stronger and an addition of heavy guns.

Things were thus, when the siege train arrived from Delhi. Now began a stir in our camp, and rumour with its hundred tongues, fixed the day of the attack. However, nothing was known for a certainty until the 9th of February. On entering the park of artillery, I found both men and officers of that branch, busy in cutting fuses and loading shell, preparing for the bloody struggle on the morrow.

To have seen the groups, little would one have supposed that ere that time the next day, many

would be no more, and that a deadly combat would have ensued. Here were a body of officers cutting fuses and joking with each other; near them were men filling shells and fixing fuses, which shell when prepared had chalked on it some direction, which if of a facetious kind, was read with roars of laughter. On large shot and shell were written such directions as these, "With my comps." "Mind your eye!" "Oh!" "Two pills to be taken at bed time." "No admittance except on business." "Mr. Tej Singh, with care." "The doctor," and a host of others, far too numerous to be mentioned or remembered.

The same afternoon spikes were served out to each regiment, and every preparation made for the coming struggle.

The arrangements were, that the force was to be ready under arms by four A.M., and strict silence preserved. At mess, was a boisterous scene, a good deal of wine drank, and toasts given; "confusion to our enemies," being drank in tumblers. After this, the steadier portion of the officers, in which were included Famine and myself, went to our tents, and slept as we best could, until awoken long before dawn by the sentry, as he whispered through the tent door, "that it was time to rise."

For myself I had slept but little, having wasted some two hours of the early part of the night in talking over the affair of the morrow; and a good

deal of the remainder, in thinking what my fate might be—whether I once again should sleep in that bed, or perhaps, ere that time to-morrow, be a mutilated corpse, and sleep the sleep that knows no waking. Then thoughts of wounds and after operations arose, until at length tired Nature claimed her right, and I slept soundly, until "Oothoo Sahib oothnee ke wukt hai. Get up, Sir, 'tis time to rise," was repeated to me by my servant, who had himself been awoke by the sentry on duty.

CHAPTER XXII.

STRICT silence was preserved, and in the dark we were got ready, and took up our position in line outside the entrenchment. The cold, raw morning worked itself into our very bones, as we remained standing some time, until the Commander-in-chief passed down the front. At length he came, accompanied by his staff, many of whom, as did their chief, whispered words of encouragement to the half-frozen men, who were but too anxious to commence their work, if for no other purpose than to get a little warm, for the cold was intense. As they passed us, the Adjutant-General said quietly, but yet heard distinctly in the stillness, "76th, fight well to-day my men," and the half hushed murmur which ran along the ranks, told that they intended so to do.

Soon the order to "form quarter distance column," was given, and we found ourselves creeping down through stunted jungle, wet land, and corn fields,

the green blades of which were dripping with fog, 'Twas cold, wet work, and none were sorry when just as the day broke, we found ourselves comfortable resting in the position assigned. This was the dry bed of a deep nullah or stream, the high bank of which proved a most efficient protection from the round shot and shell, which we soon found rattling about us.

Just as the day broke, our batteries opened fire at 1700 yards; but were not immediately replied to, as it is supposed the Sikhs were not prepared, indeed their bugles did not until then sound. This delay was taken advantage of by us to advance our guns, the distance being too far, the fuses being cut for 1200 yards. This occupied until sun-rise, which rose red and bright, instantly dispelling the fog, as if determined that each party should have a full view of the other's movements and intentions.

Now indeed the fight began; and shell, rockets, carcasses, and shot flew about in all directions, chiefly aimed at the position of our heavy guns, from which for two hours did they receive a most frightful and beautifully directed fire, every shell topping the entrenchment, and then bursting amidst the thousand defenders. Then the long streak of hissing fire said that a rocket had gone on its deadly mission, cutting its way through the dying and the dead.

For two hours did we, from our secure position

in the nullah, watch the effect of our artillery practice. The day was clear and beautiful, and nothing interfered to prevent our seeing the havoc made by shot and shell; nothing daunted by the numbers falling around, the Sikhs remanned their guns and returned our iron hail with energy.

The cold morning air had sharpened our appetites. These had not been neglected by our mess manager, who old campaigner as he was, knew that fighting on an empty stomach was not much in the line of an Englishman. Among the camels loaded with ammunition, one had been smuggled in carrying something better, namely, cold beef, pale ale and cigars. This we made kneel under the bank, and around we stood or sat a right merry party, discussing the contents of the supposed ammunition boxes. Our party was composed of a few staff and ourselves; as yet the shot and shell passed far over head, the high bank protecting us. Suddenly, with a ricochet fell a shot near us, slightly grazing and injuring a staff-officer's charger, whose rein was thrown lightly over the arm of his beef-eating master. Another shot, and with it fell dead among us the sentry patrolling on the bank above.

This dispersed us; the staff-officer returning back to his General, minus his horse, and we to nearer our companies.

A sudden stir among the troops, and the galloping backwards and forwards of aide-de-camps, told

us the time was coming for our strength to be tried. Loud bellowed the artillery, mixed with the sharp ring of the bugles, as they rang out the calls. Now came again the aide-de-camp, mounted on a trooper, with orders for us to leave our position and deploy on the right. A few moments more shelter, and then our exposed columns were a living target. Fast as the men fell under the deadly shot, did we deploy; and then immoveable as a wall, wait for the order to advance.

At last it came, and with sloped arms and steady step did the division walk over the deadly plain. Nearer and nearer still we came, no sound was heard, beyond the roaring of the artillery. From breach and embrasure belched forth sheets of flame; around and through us hissed the heavy shot and deadly grape. Over head, delivered from our artillery position came shell and rockets, burying themselves in the masses of dark-skinned men working the guns before us.

Now came the order, "trail arms" "double," and steady, still steady, with death busy in our ranks, advanced the British Army. Great gaps were filled up as soon as made; over the falling comrade stepped the soldier, his teeth clenched firmly as he surveyed the enemy in front. To the right and left, marking the spaces between the divisions kept up the Horse and Light Field-batteries. These galloping slightly a-head, unlimbered, and added their deadly

discharges to the shot and shell from heavier pieces. On, on, went these gallant men, the ground around them strewed with dead horses and dismounted riders. Now close to view came the faces of our foes, and we felt that the dread struggle was at hand. "Charge," rang out a hundred bugles; and with a cheer, heard above the cannon's roar, rushed forward all. Whole sections fell, as grape and bullet now told with double deadliness. Still we struggled on, and but few were the yards between us and our desperate foe. The army reeled, one more death discharge, and all so full of hopes, of victory, fell back.

Again a cheer, hurrah! shouted thousands; and once more we shortened the distance between us and the withering fire. But not yet was victory ours; again poured in the hailing bullets, tearing, jingal ball, and murderous grape—and foiled, but not conquered, retired that daring army.

In the confusion of retiring, officers and men were mixed together, and I found myself with Douglas. He looked pale, and was I feared wounded, but on my asking him, said, "No; though somehow I feel I shall be before the day is ours." Then shouting "hurrah!" at the top of his voice, he faced about, pointing with his sword to the right, from whence an advance was again being made.

"We must do it this time," said Ewart, the Adjutant, as he galloped past me to the left, "Three

cheers for Old England," and he was lost in dust and smoke.

A line of fire was in front; but nothing now stopped the impetuous advance. A spring into the ditch, and a scramble in its sandy bottom with the wounded and dying; another moment to breathe, and covered with sand, gore, and sweat, we swarmed up the entrenchments entering through the embrasures. But the gallant defenders were not yet to be driven back, and again we found ourselves foiled. 'Twas now the Sikhs began to waver, and deserted by their chiefs, appeared no longer sure of victory. "Hurrah" once more, and the red uniform again dotted the entrenchments. With one close withering volley and a cheer, the embrasures were entered, and the victorious troops swarmed up the strongly-built works. Nor yet was victory sure, for the Sikhs fought every inch, each bank, each tuft of grass served for defence. To the bayonet was opposed the spear and tulwar. 'Twas thus, surrounded on all sides, partly by the enemy, and partly by our own men, that I saw young Douglas fall. My endeavours to get to his assistance were of no avail. Suddenly my head swam, and for a moment I knew no more. 'Twas but for a moment, as on coming round, I found the enemy slowly giving way, and myself lying under the wheels of the gun I had spiked. To rush to where I knew Douglas lay, was the work of an instant; and there, in a sitting posi-

tion was he looking pale and haggard, still grasping tightly in his hand the handle of his broken sword.

"Thank God," he said on seeing me, "I'm glad you've come; I wanted you, and saw you by the gun, but thought you would be killed, there were too many for you; but how pale you are—are you hit?"

"No," I answered, "got knocked down with a sponge staff, I think. But never mind about me; what have they done to you?"

"Oh!" he faintly gasped out, "my sword broke, and a Sikh ran his spear through my chest; I know I must die." Here he said, "Undo my jacket, there is a Testament there; it was my good mother's gift. If you ever go home, give it to her, and say, her son died in defence of his country, and trusting to Him alone who has power to save. I —I—" he said faintly, "'tis life blood," and the pressure of his hand, which I had taken, relaxed, as he spoke fainter and fainter, then the spirit fleeted to Him that had given it. I left him, my place was with the living, and desperate with the loss of my companion and friend, rushed into the thickest of the fight. Soon the deadly strife raged round me once again, groans, screams, and shouts, mingling with the cannon's roar, then came the rattle of musketry and the return volley delivered at ten paces. A few moments' pause, and with a cheer, the foe were mingled with ourselves, no quarter

was asked or given. As they fell, so they were trampled on by advancing hosts. But a few minutes did this deadly strife continue; the bayonet hurried back the Sikh, and now their retreat began. Still they disdained to run; but in close column bade us defiance, as they slowly made for the head of their boat bridge across the river. 'Twas reached, but now the retreat became a rout, as thousands, rushing on the frail structure, tried to gain the distant shore, immoveable from numbers; the rear were hewn down in masses by our grape and musketry. Then came a charge of cavalry into those still unbroken; the brave dragoons, led up the breach in single file by their daring chief, whose empty sleeve told of victories gained in other wars.

At length the bridge, unable to sustain the weight, parted in the middle, and instantly the river is dark with drowning men. It was a fearful sight; ere long, the cannon on the opposite shore was silenced. The river rolled on, silently bearing on its surface twelve thousand corpses. And a shout proclaimed our victory!

It was dearly purchased, by the sacrifice of many of our best and bravest. Now that the fighting was over, and one had time to look about them, was seen the misery entailed by war. At my feet, in heaps, lay friend and foe tightly fixed in each other's embrace, shewing the nature of the struggle. Then around were wounded, pale and anxious, praying

for a drop of water to cool their raging thirst. Over these, galloping hither and thither in their fear, were riderless horses, and even camels. Then, again might be seen the general officer, carried wounded off the field, his grey hair dabbled with blood, the cannon yet ringing a requiem in his ears, the last he would ever hear on earth; groans, cries for help, and curses, made up the dread reality.

It was, indeed, a fearful scene.

The regiments were collected. The wounded carried away, and we prepared to return to our camp, which had been left standing.

Our loss in men was very great indeed, the regiment on being dismissed in camp, appeared little larger than a good-sized company. Of officers, besides poor Douglas killed, was my friend of the picket, poor Paddy Blake. He was blown to pieces at an embrasure. Of wounded, there were three, so that now there were scarcely enough to carry on the duty left with the regiment.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Soon the wounded and dead were forgotten, and after seeing the former properly attended to, we adjourned to mess, and the deeds of the day afforded ample subject for conversation.

"Well," said Elliot, who looked bigger, and was more noisy than ever after his day's work, "now here's luck, there's poor Paddy smashed, that capital griff Douglas gone; and may I be cut up into cavendish tobacco, if that nasty, ugly, Old Blowhard isn't alive to bother us. 'Tis too bad, however, I knew it would be so, for all the sawbones led us to think the fellow might be used up. I told you a man born to be hung, don't get drowned or shot either."

"Did the fellow fear?" asked one.

"No," said a Captain, "I don't think he did; though he was too particular, in my opinion, about preserving the place for the commanding officer. When we made the rush, 'Hurrah,' exclaimed he at the top of his voice, as the mere mention of the

charge called back his thoughts to that exciting scene. "However," he continued, "Old Blowhard may thank his bad riding for not getting shot; for his horse is riddled about the neck, and one bullet has gone through the flap of the saddle right into him; which ought to have touched up Old Blowhard's leg first, had that individual been able to ride, instead of sprawling all over a horse like a sack of corn."

"Mr. Ewart," said a voice outside the tent, recognized as belonging to the iudividual then the subject of conversation, "come here, Sir."

The Adjutant with a very quiet "hang him," said sotto voce, left his place, and was some time away in close confab with the Colonel, whilst we in the tent, fully believing that Blowhard had overheard our conversation, resolved to stick by each other; and if he said anything about it, to brave the lion in his den, and speak our minds freely. Whilst our doubts as to the cause of the lengthy detention of the Adjutant were becoming certainties, as to his having overheard, we were agreeably surprised by the return of that officer, who, with a cheer, told us, "Orders had been received for our division to be pushed on across the river; and for which purpose we were to march in three hour's time, in a direction parallel with the river and cross up higher, so as to be in time to prevent the retreating foe from re-assembling."

Our time was short for preparation, and as my head racked from the blow I had received from the Sikh gunner, added to the excitement of the day, I resolved that the couple of hours at my disposal should be passed in sleep.

The drowsy god required but little courting, and two hours passed over only too quickly; however, they were sufficient for rest, and to relieve the pain in my head.

My sword was again buckled on, but not for the same purpose as it had been in the morning, but out of respect to the dead. These were buried by torch-light in their uniform, in front of the colours. The service of the dead being read by the Adjutant.

Poor fellows, or rather poor Douglas, (for of Blake little, except his feet, were visible; his shattered remains being wrapped in his cloak) looked calm and happy, his face still having the peaceful smile which it had presented six hours ago when last seen by myself. A volley was fired, the damp earth restored to the grave, and the silent spectators returned to prepare for the night's march.

Poor Douglas! how often then, and since, have I missed him. He had every quality to make himself beloved; and though but a few weeks with the regiment, his death cast a general gloom upon all. To me it was a great blow, for from our close intimacy and my knowledge of his affairs, he had become as a brother; and often as I in after time sat or

slept in my solitary tent, did I want his companionship and strong common sense to avoid foolish extravagancies. Fine, noble boy, he was no more; and with him would probably sink his aged parents.

The bugles rang out the march, and soon we found ourselves groping our way in the dark through half struck tents, camels, blazing fires, and all the et ceteras of a camp. Then getting clear of these, the ground became broken and was now wet with the heavy dew, all around was dark, dreary, and bitterly cold; the stillness of the frosty night being broken by the rattling of muskets, the measured tramp of men, or the sharp clear word of command. Still on we struggled, sometimes falling as one tripped over the clods; but at length cold and wet with dew, we halted for half an hour at sunrise.

The country round appeared a desert of sand and water; no tree, no living thing, except ourselves, and crows—the latter attracted by the smell, were making their way thus early to the scene of yesterday's conflict. Again "quick march," and we proceeded.

About mid-day we halted on the banks of the Sutlej. Before us was a bridge of boats, and on the opposite side were encamped two regiments, who had been in reserve at this point, and on the victory being gained had crossed; and now waited to rejoin the remaining portion of the army, as it came over.

Our march had been so hurried and the road so abominable, that no baggage could be with us, or mess things either; so the setting sun saw us hungry and uncovered, anxiously hoping for the arrival of something eatable and the tents; but no, darkness came, and hope was all we had to feed on, at least with a clod for my pillow, I lay on the damp sand and tried to sleep, my feet placed near the expiring ashes of what had once been almost sufficient fire to roast a sparrow.

This fire had been the work of us all to keep in light, and could only be fed from such stray bits of dried grass as all with difficulty collected. Round this we had sat, until one by one we dropped asleep, and thus continued until one, more easily awakened or perhaps more hungry than his companions, heard the mess arive.

Its advent was the signal for a general rush to the spot selected by the tired servants for their resting place, and soon its stores were ransacked for cold meats and beer. But we were doomed to disappointment, as of the former there was none, and of the latter a similar amount, it being all behind with the tents. In fact the arrival of the mess consisted of the arrival of the khansaman, (head-man or butler), some of the servants, a few sheep and empty boxes. We bore our disappointment as we best could, and resumed our slumbers on the frozen ground, having previously given orders for one of

the said sheep to be slaughtered and turned into chops by daylight.

Long ere that time, we were awoke again, further rest being impossible, with the noise and bustle of the baggage arriving, to say nothing of the intense cold, which made one ache to the very marrow. With what delight did we see the sun rise, and feel its cheering warmth upon our frozen limbs; then the smell of cooking was borne on the morning breeze, and the chops with beer and tea were before us.

At first, from so long a fast and the excessive fatigue and exposure, I possessed but little inclination to eat; but the first cup of tea, real, glorious unadulterated tea, set me all to rights, and then not enough could be found to satisfy my ravening. It may appear greedy, to say there is an excessive delight in eating; but let a person try a harassing march all night, and part of the next day, then a long, sleepless night in the open air, and all this without food, and if he won't find a delight in eating, then I am a Dutchman.

In these hurried marches, I found a pipe or cigar the greatest comfort, it soothed and kept away excessive hunger.

About mid-day we started across the river, having taken the precaution to load one of the camels, carrying ammunition boxes, with something besides cartridges. The animal's load being balanced with the

legs and shoulders of the sheep in a roasted state, also beer, tea, kettle, and other little things, all necessary for the day's dinner, or supper, for there was no knowing at what time or where that meal would be eaten.

This way of taking some provisions with us, was very useful, more particularly in crossing into the Punjaub, as no baggage was allowed to cross until the whole force had done so, consequently, another hungry day and night would have been our lot. As it was, the mutton was eaten on the wet sand by moonlight, and we shivered through another dreadful night.

At daybreak we moved on towards Lahore, but met with no opposition, the beaten Sikhs having retired on that city, intending to make a stand there.

This never was the case. On the third day from our entry into the Punjaub, Goolab Singh, (who playing his cards well, had managed to keep at Jummoo during all the riots and murders which hastened on the war), presented himself, made submission, and received Cashmere as his reward.

It was with no pleasant feelings that the army received this intelligence, for the man was not liked by friend or foe; and his cruelties in the country now presented to him, were matters of common conversation. Indeed so bad were they, as to have caused many a poor shawl-worker to leave home,

family, and all he held most dear, and seek a refuge in our cantonments at Loodiana.

There was one comfort in his arrival, which brought with it a halt; thereby allowing the baggage to come up, and once again I slept snugly in a bed, the comforts of which were greatly enhanced by the three previous nights spent on the damp ground.

Lahore was reached, and with it parades and proclamations; the most interesting one of which, was that telling the army they should receive a year's batta, a sum very liberal, but still not sufficient to the junior ranks to cover the serious expenses they had incurred in carriage, mess, &c., &c.

The parades became frightfully frequent, and I began to regret my endeavours before and since the battle to learn any drill. These had now caused me to be reported fit for duty, and as such an almost daily attendant at parades, the frequency of which only bothered all. Their utter uselessness being shewn by other regiments in the same division, who when required on field days, manœuvred with greater precision and celerity than ourselves; and yet their private parades were as one to our four. But our men were bothered, and others not so, consequently worked more willingly.

The life before Lahore had nothing particularly interesting in it. Reviews on a large scale, and feasts on a smaller. At one of these former, the whole army was present and marched past to salute

the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief. It must have been a grand sight, that army of 40,000 men flushed with victory, passing in review. Among the spectators were all the Punjaub chiefs and notabilities, some in chain armour, on horses, hidden under magnificent accoutrements. Then, mixed up with these were hundreds of elephants, on whose backs were howdahs of solid gold and silver, glittering in the brilliant sunshine. A little apart was the gallant chief and his staff, returning the salute of each regiment as it passed, and observing with heightened colour the march of those who had gained him a fortune and a title.

Conspicuous in this gorgeous throng was the old Scinde conqueror, whose awful boots, solar topee and undress uniform, drew particular attention. There he sat on his Arab charger, apparently lost to all around, but the movements of the army before him.

The Scinde chief obtained as much notice from the singularity of dress, as from any other cause. The ill-made hunting boots, grizzled beard, straggling to the waist, and solar topee, seemed out of place; better adapted for the wilds of Australia than at a general review, at which the troops were all clean and in uniform. But, perhaps, Sir Charles, as he liked singularity, preferred being so in this instance; or being anxious to prove that baggage was not necessary for officers, came without any, even omitting the shirt, towel, and bit of soap.

Hearing from home about this time, I received a letter of introduction to an officer holding a high and influential appointment in the service, and he being then in camp, I determined on presenting it in person. Not that I could hope for its leading to anything, as I had not been long enough in the service for that; but still, there was no knowing what might result, particularly as appointments were not very difficult to obtain at that time, and many of the recipients were among the least brilliant of mortals.

Oily Gammon, for such was the nick-name of the officer to whom my letter was directed, was easily accessible; and, report said, had a way of misleading every applicant into a vain belief, that no one more than he (Oily) appreciated the talents and merits of the would-be staff-officer, and as such, would not fail to remember him when an opportunity of serving him should present itself.

My letter was extracted from an old, crabbed Scotch cousin of his, whom if he disliked as much as I did, would certainly never have been decently civil. However, as it was, Oily received me with the greatest affability, "begged I would be seated, hoped the aforesaid Scotch relative was well, trusted I had already seen how necessary a complete knowledge of the native languages was, and would endeavour to pass; and, finally, he would not fail in remembering me, &c., &c."

The silence that ensued, told me that I was now

expected to say "thank you," and walk off, which I did, feeling pretty sure, in my own mind, that these words had been used to hundreds before me, and nothing came of them. Yet I could expect no more, though I certainly did wish he had promised me an appointment as soon as I had passed—a wish indulged in by almost every youngster in the service, who, if he lives long enough, will discover, that here as elsewhere, "kissing goes by favour;" and that in most instances, let him qualify himself ever so fully for the public service, and be, moreover, a well-educated gentleman, these advantages will go for nothing compared with that of having an uncle in the Directory, or, better still, being the tenth cousin of a big wig's wife. Then all is smooth sailing. The examination is mild, and the spell of regimental duty, just sufficient to satisfy existing rules. A vacancy is found, to fill which, the man with interest is, as a matter of course, suited.

The life of his less fortunate companion is not such as will induce him, not having interest, to put himself to the expense and trouble of passing. If he does so, after all, to find that he continues at regimental duty, that most amusing of all existences, in which his mornings, and frequently his evenings, are spent at the intellectual employment called khud-dumoothao, *i.e.*, parade. This, even, being generally confined to grinding round the square, and saluting gracefully, winding up with manual and platoon

exercise. Then the day time is occupied with courts-martial, and, still worse, courts of request, to say nothing of a treasure party, sent off at two days' notice on a three months' march; and this, probably, in the hot weather, with the thermometer in tents at 125°.

Well, to return. After seeing all the sights of Lahore, the whole force broke up: some to remain, some to the provinces, and the rest to occupy the Jullundur Doab—a tract of country the richest and most fertile of any in the Punjaub, which was taken by us as a set-off against expenses incurred, thereby shewing our power and moderation in not taking more. Ill-natured report said, we would have taken the whole Punjaub then, but not having troops sufficient, made a virtue of necessity, and contented ourselves with a *tidy slice*, a bit sure to pay.

The 76th were ordered to the Jullundur, and, ere long, we found ourselves busy in building houses, and enjoying life in tents during the hot season, which, after all, passed away pleasantly enough, notwithstanding the heat, which frequently reached as high as 120° in our tents.

We led a kind of primitive life, seeing few, if any strangers, and being obliged to send thirty miles to the nearest cantonment for such a thing as a wine-glass or tea-cup; so that in the event of such articles being broken, their places were supplied by

shaving mugs, and bottles cut in half, until a further supply could be received. Our amusements were shooting and hunting, as often as we could get away from parades, at which Old Blowhard was more zealous than ever.

Several fresh officers had joined the regiment; the late war having caused many vacancies. Among those recently posted was an assistant-surgeon, whose frank manners, and powers of anecdote, rendered him a favourite and most amusing companion. Often have we, assembled in the mess-house, listened with pleasure to his tales of former days, and wondered how he had seen so much of life and adventure; for he was yet but young. The account he gave of himself was of the shortest; simply, that he had tried practice in London, and having exhausted all his small stock of ready money in waiting for patients, and seeing arrest instead of fees staring him in the face, he most willingly accepted an appointment in India; where, to use his own words, "he was very jolly, and liked the life exceedingly."

Many of the scenes in his stories had really occurred either to himself or others, and as a page from his history will be infinitely more interesting than one from mine, I do not hesitate to present it to my readers. So if I am fortunate enough to find such a person, let him imagine seven or eight

of us, all lounging round the mess-table, each with a Manilla cheroot in his mouth, comfortably listening to our medico; who has been fairly bothered into the following tale, which he had christened the "Castle Ball."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE bells rang merry peals from the old ivy-mantled tower of the parish church at Lancaster. Cannon were fired, flags were hoisted, and all was holiday in honour of the review of the county militia, which having been quartered in the town for the past month, were on this day to be released from further training.

The conduct during this time, both of men and officers, had been such as to render their departure a matter of regret, and the citizens vied with each other in doing honour to their gallant company.

The officers had become as noted for their agreeable manners and hospitality, as the men had for their excellent conduct; and were frequently the guests of the neighbouring noblemen and gentry. As a return for all the kindness they had received, it was determined that the day's proceedings should be closed with a ball; to which, besides their numerous friends of the surrounding country, should also be invited the — regiment, at that time in garrison at

the Castle. In the invitation to the ball, was also included an invite to the review; and long ere the time fixed for the proceeding to begin, the parade ground was filled with spectators, from the rich nobleman and squire with his carriage and four, to the humble mechanic, all animated with the desire that the regiment before them, might acquit themselves in a manner worthy of the county to which they belonged.

The review was over; the new colours presented and handed over to the kneeling Ensigns by the fair daughter of the county magnate, and all returned to the town. The poorer classes to their suppers, and the higher to dinner and preparations for the ball.

The ball-room was tastefully decorated with military trophies; and ere long was thronged with the gallant and beautiful. Conspicuous among her sex was Miss O'Neale, whose tall graceful figure, and perfect beauty, was the general theme of conversation.

To gain her hand for a dance, was the object of every young fellow in the room; and many envied the luck of young Coventry, who besides having the pleasure of twice dancing, succeeded in having her under his protection at the supper table.

However much lookers on might envy, yet none of them could feel angry at the evident preference shewn by Miss O'Neale for Coventry, as he was a

general favourite, and moreover, the finest, handsomest, and best made man in the — regiment, and as such, allowed to be the lady-killer of the corps. Some said he was an abominable flirt, and only made love to the girls for the fun of the thing, thereby frequently causing utter ruin to the hopes of an anxious mamma or trembling siren. However, this might or might not be true, one thing is certain, as sure as the — regiment went to new quarters, there was sure to be a love affair between Lieutenant Coventry and the prettiest girl in the neighbourhood. That gentleman himself put it down to extreme susceptibility on his part, and fondness on the other.

The ball came to an end at last; and each fair girl first carefully muffled in shawl and cloak, descended the well lit staircase leaning on a soldier's arm, by whom they were escorted to their carriages.

Miss O'Neale was handed out by Coventry, and as he pressed her hand in saying farewell, he mentioned his intention of riding over on the morrow to inquire "how much injury she had received by the evening's exertion." Then the windows were drawn up, and she and her aunt rolled on their road homewards.

According to promise, Coventry next day rode over to Wennington, at which place Miss O'Neale was staying on a visit to her aunt, the wife of a rich merchant at Calcutta.

Her aunt, Mrs. Phillips was rich enough, or at any rate sufficiently well provided with money, to allow her to gratify almost every wish, so among other luxuries, horses both for riding and driving purposes were not omitted.

The arrival of Coventry was expected. He received a hearty welcome, and stayed to lunch; after which the horses being ordered round, the whole party galloped over to see the old town of Kirby Londsdale.

The day was beautiful, and Coventry found willing listeners in his companions to his descriptions of the various seats and the habits of their owners, with all of whom he was more or less acquainted.

The sun was just sinking as the party returned to Wennington, and it was very late ere Coventry, slipping on his uniform, walked over to the mess.

"Well, Coventry, you're a nice fellow to keep an appointment!" exclaimed Captain Dacres, as that individual entered the room. "I waited and waited for you to come to the Newtons, and when I sent over to your quarters, I was told you had borrowed a nag and ridden out Wennington way. 'Pon honour, 'tis too bad. There the charming Kitty asked twice after you."

"Hang her," laconically answered Coventry.

"Not exactly," replied Dacres, "she is too good a girl for that. I'll tell you what, old fellow, you might go further, and fare worse. She is a first rate

girl—the finest hereabouts, and has "a wee bit tocher," as they call a few thousands in the Major's country.

"In my opinion," said rather a fast Ensign, "she is by far the finest girl in this place; worth a dozen of that tall pale girl they made such a fuss about last night; Miss—what do you call her, O'Neale?"

"What's that you say about Miss O'Neale?" demanded our hero, in a voice far from good-humoured or civil.

"Oh, that's the way the wind blows, is it?" was the fast Ensign's reply. "How long will it remain in that quarter, think you? Poor Kitty, she has joined the dear departed; ah, well, but perhaps

> "'Tis as well to be off with the old love,
> Before you are on with the new."

hummed the Ensign.

"I say, Coventry," put in the good natured Major, talking in broad, north country accent; "you'll go too far some day, and be brought down like a garden thrush. Just you take my advice, now; and do na have anything to say to these women kind, for they are d—d troublesome, and make waur work with the siller."

"Do you think so?" asked Coventry, hoping to change the direction of the conversation.

"Yes, I do," responded the Major; "and I speak from experience, for when—"

"Ah, ah;" interrupted Captain Dacres; "the Major speaks from the experience he had with the bright-eyed gazelle of the Rock, who had the exquisite bad taste to prefer the great, hairy, smutty-faced, Don Diavolo Inferno, to the square-built descendant of the Malcolm."

"But, but—" pleaded the Major.

"Come, Major," said half a dozen voices, "tell us all about your love affair;" and that officer, nothing loth, told the oft-repeated tale, of how, when with the regiment at Gibraltar, he had been forsaken by a perfect houri, all black eyes and ringlets, for a great handsome Spaniard, all teeth and whiskers.

The telling of this story was just what Coventry required, as it drew away attention from himself and prevented comparisons (to him decidedly odious), being drawn between Miss O'Neale and, perhaps, some garrison hack. By the time it was done, the party began to break up, and Coventry arm in arm with Dacres, lighting their cigars, strolled into the town.

Coventry was but a poor man, having nothing independant of his pay, excepting such sums as were given him at different times by his uncle, a whimsical old bachelor, who, proud of his handsome nephew and of the fuss made with him, would sometimes be lavish in his gifts, and laugh at the nephew's extravagance; whilst at 'others, he would refuse him a

sixpence, and hold out so long in his refusal, as to cause the greatest alarm to Coventry for fear of arrest. On these occasions, Lieutenant Coventry confined himself chiefly to his barracks, placing the safety of his person in the hands of his servant; whose experiences led him to discover and circumvent a bailiff under any species of disguise. Often when thus straigthened for means, threatened by duns, and confined to barracks, did he determine to do as his uncle recommended his doing in every letter he wrote, viz: to "commit matrimony, and propose to some woman or another willing to take him, and provide him with the means of carrying on the war."

When Coventry returned to his quarters that night he felt that Miss O'Neale had made a greater impression on him than her sex usually did, and that her image remained fixed in his mind, notwithstanding his efforts to dislodge it.

Then he found himself busy planning in his head for the ways and means to meet her again, or for some plausible excuse to go once more over to Wennington. "Pshaw," said he to himself, "what nonsense," and turning over, determined to go to sleep; but it was no use trying, his mind was far too active. So he turned again and again, until towards morning, the longed wished for slumber came, and with it dreams—in which balls, pretty girls, duns, and old uncles mixed themselves up in a manner most chaotic.

When there is a will, there is a way; and as our hero had the will, he was not long in finding out a way, or an excuse for an early visit to Wennington. When there, his reception was so cordial and kind, as to make him regret having allowed four days to elapse between this and his first visit. Another long ride through the Valley of the Loon, and moonlight saw them home.

It being, as Mrs. Phillips knew, too late for Mr. Coventry to return in time for mess, she could do nothing else than ask that gentleman to stay and partake of their dinner, the first bell for which was then ringing; to this, after some show of refusal on our hero's part, who "feared he inconvenienced, &c, &c," an acceptation was given.

The evening passed off as might be expected, most pleasantly. Miss O'Neale sang well and sweetly, and as Coventry had a fair voice and some knowledge of music, he was able to accompany her. A small tray was brought in with wine, and about midnight, Coventry was cantering along the road to Lancaster head over ears in love.

The repetition of his visit was not lost on so shrewd an observer as Mrs. Phillips, and as her niece appeared to rather like Coventry, she determined to find out more concerning him, and shew civility, or not, as he proved eligible or otherwise.

There was a fancy fair held, at which she and her niece had a stall, and it was there her inquiries were

instituted. However, she heard nothing satisfactory or unsatisfactory; everybody knew and liked Mr. Coventry, and as to his means, none in the regiment knew how he managed. He generally had money, and certainly lived very extravagantly.

These questions and answers had all been gathered from different sources, one, indeed, being from Coventry himself—who, observing in the hands of Mrs. Phillips, some highly priced and highly useless article, requested to be considered as the purchaser, and when asked in a smiling manner for the money, answered, "I will bring it to-morrow to Wennington, and write to my uncle for a further supply."

The money was a capital excuse for riding over to Wennington, and next day Coventry did so, finding Mrs. Phillips kinder than ever, and Miss O'Neale all that he could wish or imagine. He stayed to lunch, and managed this time to be back in time for dinner.

For this, however, he had little appetite, and, somehow, thought that dining at mess was a bore, and the society of so many men anything but pleasant.

His altered manners did not escape unnoticed, and many were the questions, as to the cause, put to him, and many the bits of advice tendered as a cure for "spooniness," as they termed his disease. But to none of these did he pay attention, only wishing the donors further away, and himself once again at Wennington.

Mary O'Neale had been staying with her annt at Wennington some months, having come there from the house of another aunt with whom she resided at a quiet place in Worcestershire. But as Mrs. Phillips proposed returning in a short time to India, it was determined that Miss O'Neale should make her acquaintance, and accepted an invitation accordingly.

This invitation had been more than once before given, but something always occurred to prevent its acceptation. Mrs. Phillips was anxious to see her niece, so asked again, for she had heard much of her beauty, and desired to introduce, and, perhaps, to show her off to some of her country acquaintances, and, with herself, join in the gaiety going on, instead of "burying herself alive," as Mrs. Phillips called her residing in the quiet county of Worcestershire.

Mary accepted, though the promised gaiety had but little charms for her, as the death of her much-loved mother occurring soon after she attained her seventeenth birthday, and the retired habits of her truly good aunt, made her look on gaiety and parties partly with fear, and partly with dislike.

Her father was an officer of no mean merit in the Indian army, and had, some years before, accompanied his wife and only daughter home from India, intending to retire from active service at the expiration of his leave. But the sad event of his dear wife's death, two years after her arrival, determined him on returning to India, first depositing as a

sacred trust to the care of his widowed sister, his only daughter. For in such hands, he knew a mother's watchful care was to be found.

Guileless as was Mary, yet she was able to see that the handsome, much admired Coventry liked her, and by his frequent visits, that he took a pleasure in her society.

Her own sentiments towards him, she did not like to admit even to herself; but an inward feeling told her she felt more for him than all the world beside. During his absence she was unsettled, and on his arrival being announced, she knew that heightened colour and brighter eye told the tale concealed in the inmost recesses of her heart.

Coventry's visits had now become so frequent as no longer to require a reason being given, and, as a consequence, his company at the mess-table less frequent. Indeed, his being present there was the signal for the conversation to always take a turn more or less personal as regarded himself. Advice and banter were so intermingled, as to greatly annoy him, and often drive him home to his quarters, more anxious to quit that state of society than ever.

"Poor fellow," said Dacres, "if he isn't spooney, I don't know what is. He scowls at one like a hungry hyena, if spoken to, and goes sighing about like a furnace. I have known him have four or five love affairs, but were never anything so bad as this; why, if it was a first love (which they say is rather

trying), one could excuse him; but he is a regular old hand at it."

"Ah, well," said the Scotch Major, "I told him how it would be, and he would na believe me, for the experience I had when at the Rock—"

"Come, Major," said the Adjutant, "pray preserve the balance of that little episode in your career until some future period, and let's leave Coventry; Mess and the Rock alone, and stroll homewards." Notwithstanding all the banter and personal remarks, still Coventry persevered in being constant to Wennington, and one day told the tale of his long pent up love. The half whispered "yes," told him it was returned, and soon after he rode away the happiest of mortals, leaving his dearest Mary to break the news to Mrs. Phillips.

The event had been long expected by that lady, and so after kissing and congratulating her fair niece, she resolved to have some private conversation with Mr. Coventry on the morrow. Coventry rode very gently homewards, his thoughts occupied with what he should say and do the next day, as he felt certain his meeting with Mrs. Phillips would be to consider the ways and means. All he had, he well knew was derivable from the old uncle, and who, from the usual tenor of his notes and advice, was not very likely to consent to his match. From all that he (Coventry) could gather, it appeared that Miss O'Neale was but badly off.

however, he hoped all would be comfortably arranged, and that, perhaps, the aunt would give from her apparently ample store.

Puzzling his brain as to how to get over the uncle, and as to the part he should play on the morrow, was the occupation of our hero until bed-time, and commenced afresh next day, continuing until his arrival in due time at Wennington.

The old familiar room was vacant on his entry, but the scissors, thimble, and small work-box, on the table, showed that it had recently been occupied, and the thought struck him just vacated as he came up. There was a dullness about everything that he had never before noticed. He wished Mrs. Phillips would come, and bring all these disagreeables to an end; the fire was nearly concealed by ashes, these he removed, first for something to do, and secondly to shew *to himself* that he had now a certain right to poke the fire. "Hang it, I wish she'd come," soliloquised Coventry. "I wonder what she will begin with? about money I suppose—humph, that won't be over satisfactory. Let's see. There's—" and he began for the thousandth time, to go over in his mind the amount of income he could collect from every possible and impossible source.

"How do you do, Mr. Coventry?" said Mrs. Phillips, entering the room; "I am sorry to have kept you waiting, but I was away in the garden, and did not know, until this moment, of your arrival.

Now, Mr. Coventry, we have much to say to each other, and let us say it all comfortably; so draw the arm-chair to the fire, which stir, and I dare say we shall be the very best of friends." Mrs. Phillips paused, Coventry pulled the chair nearly into the grate, stirred the fire violently, and paused too. 'Twas awkward this silence; Coventry hoped Mrs. Phillips would say something more, but as she did not, he found he must; so in a low voice began, "Well, Mrs. Phillips—" then shaking off the half nervous, half stupid feeling that bound him, he told her fairly and honestly how matters stood. "That in his opinion, her niece was all man could wish for in a wife, and that in asking her to become his, he was actuated by no selfish motives, but by real, true, earnest affection for one that he knew returned his love."

"Well, Mr. Coventry," answered Mrs. Phillips, "I have no doubt you love Mary, and Mary loves you; but to be very unromantic, but I hope not unkind, let me ask if you think your uncle will consent, and allow you a still larger allowance than he does at present; as one hundred pounds a year beyond your pay is hardly enough to enable you to live as a married man in the style you have been accustomed to. And let me add, my dear Mr. Coventry, that from as much as I have known of you, I do not think you would like to relinquish all, or nearly all of your present enjoyments, and

live most retired, for such so limited an income would require."

"But," answered Coventry, "I would do anything, and am heartily sick of gaiety, so that a retired life would have the greatest charms now, more particularly with Mary to share the solitude. As to my uncle, I will write, but hardly think he will give more—but—you must not be offended Mrs. Phillips, at my asking if Miss O'Neale cannot bring some little towards the empty exchequer?"

"No," replied Mrs. Phillips, "Mary has not a farthing. Her father, the Colonel, got into debt when a young man, and has, I know, very lately borrowed a large sum from one of the banks to enable him to purchase his step, for he is only a Major regimentally; so I am certain he would not allow her anything. Then your uncle, I doubt that too; but let us say no more about it until you hear from him. Is not this the best way?" asked Mrs. Phillips, "well then," resumed that lady, "the sooner all these disagreeable little things are settled the better. So will you write to your uncle, whilst I go and order lunch; when you have finished, come to the dining room, we will be there at lunch. Pen, ink, and paper are on that table, and au revoir," said the cool woman of the world, as she slipped out of the room, leaving our hero staring at the fire, and looking very sheepish indeed.

"Humph!" muttered Coventry, "write to the uncle

—well, I suppose I must; but what on earth to say. Hang that fire, I wish it would burn," and seizing the poker he did his best to make it do so. Then resuming his soliloquy, said, "How am I to begin? tell the old fellow, that he will be glad to hear I am going to be married; and that I want more coin. Or praise up Mary, and appeal to his feelings. Bah —he hasn't such things; so that won't do. All he cares for, is money, and Mary has not a half-penny. Bother and hang the thing; well never mind, here goes a letter," and Coventry wrote somewhat as follows:

"You have often expressed a desire to see me comfortably married and settled, and now, do not be surprised, but rather consider me as dutiful, for acting under your advice. I am heartily sick of mess parties, flirting and extravagancies; and have determined to live quietly and soberly with Mary. She is all I could wish for in a wife, and is one of whom you even would be proud. Her father is a Colonel in India.

"Now, uncle, about money. You make me a most liberal allowance I own; and with that and occasional bills paid, I have hitherto managed to hold my own with most of my brother officers; but now, as a married man, I hardly think the allowance is sufficient, and don't get annoyed at my asking for more. Say fifty or one hundred a year

more; thus shall I be able to give dearest Mary such comforts as she has been accustomed to receive; and its possession will tend to the happiness of your ever dutiful nephew,

"ALEX. COVENTRY."

"P.S.—I had forgotten to mention that Mary is not well off, so pray assist us, my dear uncle."

The letter was sealed, and Coventry with it in his hand descended to the dining-room. Here he found Mary alone, and pleasant was their talk over future prospects. She was hopeful and trusting; and her confidence tended particularly to dispel the doubts in Coventry's mind, concerning his receiving an increased allowance from the uncle.

Mrs. Phillips came in; and after lunch they all rode out together. Coventry being most agreeable, and having imbibed some of Mary's hopefulness, gave Mrs. Phillips glowing pictures of his uncle's generosity and future happiness.

The letter was posted by Coventry as he returned to Lancaster, and the few days that intervened between its being written and the reply, were spent in anxious doubts by all parties. At length, the long wished for, yet much dreaded reply was received, and Coventry, mounting his horse, rode over to Wennington to explain its contents to Mary.

His face shewed that the answer was unfavourable,

and ere long the three were in earnest conversation regarding future arrangements.

"But," said Mrs. Phillips, "can you not let us see this letter, as we can all then judge better about what is to be done."

"I would rather not show it to you or even Mary," replied Coventry, "as it holds out no hopes, but will, I am afraid, render the match impossible."

"How, impossible!" said Mary, her utterance nearly choked with suppressed feeling, "surely we can wait. Oh, that horrid money, I wish there was none. It cannot be so bad, do read it," and her tearful eyes looked imploringly at Coventry.

"I will then read it," said Coventry, "but I know my uncle well enough to feel certain that he will act up to what he says. Oh, Mary, dearest, I do indeed wish money was unnecessary, what can we do?"

"Well, read it, Mr. Coventry," said Mrs. Phillips, her practical mind not approving of the turn the conversation was taking.

Thus appealed to, the letter was taken from the corner of the pocket in which it had been angrily thrust, and Coventry read as follows:—

"Dear Alex.

"When I mentioned marriage, I did not intend your committing that folly with a pauper. I wanted you to marry a girl with some thousands, one who would be fool enough to take you, and pay for your

extravagancies—not one, that causes my already overtaxed means to be still further diminished by an increased allowance to yourself. You know very well I can ill afford to give all I do to you, and am annoyed at your expecting it.

"Miss Mary (you do not tell me her surname), is, I have no doubt, all that is good and amiable, indeed, too much so for you; but your marriage with her would only entail great misery on both parties, as from it, nothing but poverty would arise. This she might be able to bear, but you could not; hence would come grumblings and discontent, all of which would be visited upon your poor wife.

"The allowance I make you is sufficient to enable you to live as a gentleman, and ample for all your wants; consequently there is no excuse for your running into debt as you do; and were it not that I fear your losing your commission, I would not encourage these abominable extravagancies by paying them. However, I will pay no more, and, moreover, wish to state most distinctly that I will withdraw all allowance if you marry this girl.

"It may appear unkind, but I have considered the subject well before coming to this decision; so I again say, that if you marry this girl you will never have any help from me for the future.

"Ever yours,

"JOHN COVENTRY."

The silence that ensued after the perusal of this letter was at last broken by Mary, who asked Coventry, "If he did not think that his uncle would relent, for he seems kind-hearted."

"No," replied that individual, "I know him well. You see he tells me that he has been in no hurry to decide."

"But," pleaded Mary, "don't you think he will change even if I wrote? He certainly calls me a pauper, which is most uncivil," and she tried to laugh, poor girl, whilst her heart was breaking at the thoughts of her losing Coventry for ever.

"For my part," said Mrs. Phillips, "I see but little hope. Mary might write and try that; but still from the letter of your uncle, I see, that under any circumstance your allowance cannot be increased; and I agree with him in thinking that it would be madness your marrying as you are at present situated, Mr. Coventry's note is in my opinion reasonable and not unkind. However, let us try again and I will leave you two here to concoct an epistle, which you had better see posted yourself."

"Well, Mary," said Coventry, on finding himself alone with her. "This is a sad business, I cannot tell how to act. If after all the uncle does not come down with the money, what on earth are we to do?"

"Wait and hope for better times," replied Mary; "I am willing to do so, but yet trust all will be well."

"It may be," gloomily answered Coventry; "however, you write and I will do so, too, enclosing it in mine."

The letters were written. Coventry's being half begging, and half apologetic. Whilst Mary's was kind, loving, and yet dignified. With these Coventry rode away.

In due course of time answers were received. The one addressed to his nephew being short and determined. In it the old gentleman stated most positively his inability, under any circumstances, to allow more than he at present did, and his intention to withdraw that did the nephew marry Miss O'Neale. To Mary his letter was kind, but did not hold her out the slightest hope—giving as his reason, that his nephew was far too careless in money matters and extravagant, ever to live on a limited income; and that he foresaw in his union with her nothing but misery, and begged that she would endeavour to forget all that had occurred.

Both letters were placed in an envelope and sent by post from Coventry to Mrs. Phillips; who, after handing over to Mary the one addressed to her, perused that written to Coventry. Having done so, she turned to observe Mary, who, silent and sad, was sitting near the window sobbing as if her heart would break.

"I think," began Mrs. Phillips, "Mr. Coventry might have brought these himself, and not have sent

them by post without even a word or line to say whether he was pleased or sorry to have received them. I really think he is rather pleased than otherwise."

"Oh!" interrupted Mary, "do not say anything against him, perhaps the news upset him, and he could not write or come."

"Upset, fiddle de dee," said the stronger-minded Mrs. Phillips. "He is too old a hand to be so easily upset. I begin to think he was looking after money, and fancied you had some; and now is very glad of his uncle as an excuse to get out of it. I think the uncle is the kinder hearted, he is, at any rate, honest about it. I do not wish, dear Mary, to say anything to hurt your feelings; but still, I think Mr. Coventry's manner altered from the time I told him you had nothing."

"But," sobbed Mary, "I know he might have married girls with money, as he has told me so, and I will wait for ever if he likes."

"Yes, Mary," said Mrs. Phillips, "you'll wait, but I don't think he would. But, Mary, it is really a most foolish match, and can be productive of no good. Do give it up."

"Never!" firmly responded Mary; "never, except he wishes it, and then, aunt—I do."

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Phillips, "I will write to him and acknowledge the receipt of the letters,

and remember, dear, under these circumstances, and in common justice to your father, I must say that it will best if all is now ended between you. According to his answer, so you can act."

After some time, Mary consented to these arrangements; though not without many a fear that Coventry might be offended or think that she was anxious for the match to be broken off; and consequently desert her for ever.

Mrs. Phillips wrote thus:—

"Dear Mr. Coventry,

"I was a good deal hurt and surprised at the letters coming by the post, and hope ill health was not the cause of your not writing or bringing them yourself.

"The tenor of Mr. Coventry's letter, both to yourself and to my niece, leads me to feel certain, that in prolonging this engagement, nothing but trouble will be the result; therefore, for both parties, it would be better were it now brought to a conclusion. This, after some consideration, I dare say you will see yourself.

"No doubt this will be a sad blow to both, and I could wish for your sakes that it had been otherwise; but under all circumstances, I really think it is your best and wisest plan, and do not be offended with me for saying so.

"This I hope may not diminish our friendship;

but with best wishes for your welfare and happiness, believe me,

"Ever yours sincerely,
"ELLEN PHILLIPS."

Coventry had done little else than sit over the fire all day after sending the letters to Mrs. Phillips; lost in conjecture as to what her reply might be. Several times it struck him that both she and Mary would have expected him to have brought them himself, and, perhaps, feel hurt at his not having done so. But this he could not help, as he would rather risk offending them both, than subject himself to the searching glance and disagreeably plain reasoning of Mrs. Phillips. To tell the truth, he rather disliked that lady, and felt that she could read his character perfectly well.

Next day's post brought the letter from Wennington, which, as soon as read, was crumpled up, and tossed into the fire. Then the desk was unlocked, and Coventry wrote thus:

"My dear Mrs. Phillips,

"It was as I expected; my uncle would not alter his determination, and to fly in his face would be madness. I would not be so selfish, under such circumstances, as to ask dearest Mary to continue the engagement. I would write to her, but can hardly trust myself; so do you tell her how vexed I

am at the turn affairs have taken. Poor dear girl, would that it could have been otherwise; but I would never drag her into that poverty which would be hard for either to bear. As you say, I trust this affair may not diminish our friendship, and with every kind wish towards Miss O'Neale and yourself, believe me to be,

"Ever yours sincerely,

"ALEX. COVENTRY."

"Well," said Mrs. Phillips, on receiving this letter, as she sat with her niece at the breakfast-table, "it is, my dear, dear Mary, just as I expected, he is glad of the opportunity to get off the engagement."

"Oh, aunt," said Mary, "I don't see that. He says he would not be so selfish as to continue it. It is me, the poor fellow is thinking of."

"Is he?" said Mrs. Phillips. "No, Mary, dear, read the letter over again, and you will see it in a different light. He would write to you, but 'is vexed at the turn affairs have taken.' Vexed! Is that all? And towards the end of his letter, observe, he owns that poverty is hard to bear, and evidently is unwilling to risk it. No, dear, I cannot approve of Mr. Coventry, and am very glad the 'affair,' as he terms it, is concluded. That he likes you, I believe; and that, perhaps, more than he himself supposes. But still, his love is too selfish for

him to forego one single pleasure, or be inconvenienced for your sake. Remember, Mary, I am older, and have seen a great deal more of the world than you have, and know that if a man loved a woman, he would have put himself to far greater trouble about obtaining her than ever Mr. Coventry has. I would never have advocated your marrying him against his uncle's wish; but had there been any great wish on Mr. Coventry's part to have his uncle's decision changed, perhaps a personal interview, or further efforts might have been successful. These he has never tried. Then he is notoriously extravagant, and has so long been accustomed to have every wish gratified, that he would feel poverty all the more keenly. All is for the best, Mary, and I am only sorry that my invitation to Wennington should have caused you so much sorrow and anxiety."

Poor Mary tried hard to think that her aunt's opinion regarding Coventry was incorrect; but the more she thought over what had occurred, the surer she felt Mrs. Phillips was right. Now she remembered that when he had once asked her, "What was to be done in the event of the money not being given," she had replied, "Wait and hope for better times;" but this answer seemed to have no response in his breast. 'Twas hard to think thus, but appearances were so much against him.

A week passed away, and as Coventry neither called nor wrote, she felt assured he had forgotten

her, and so endeavoured to forget him; but this was difficult to do, with one she loved so dearly living so near. Under these circumstances, she determined on bidding her aunt farewell, and hiding her disappointment and her sorrows in the dear, quiet home in Worcestershire.

Several times during that week, had Coventry determined on going over to Wennington; but each time his courage failed him, and he put off doing so until another day. Thus passed a fortnight; when, mounting his horse, he rode over, but on arrival, was not admitted within, as Mrs. Phillips said "not at home;" and from the servant he heard of the departure of Miss O'Neale.

His thoughts as he rode homewards were not of a very pleasing description. An inward monitor told him he had behaved very badly in not having called there before. To drown care, he resolved to enter more wildly than ever into all the gaieties and amusements going on; from which, during the engagement with Miss O'Neale, he had absented himself almost entirely.

His return to mess, and the old style of living did not pass unnoticed; and numerous were the remarks made in his presence and during his absence at the cause. The repetition of jokes, and the frequency of personal remarks, made the mess, and the society generally of his brother officers, become wearisome; so bad indeed was it, as to determine

him to exchange; his uncle's consent was very easily obtained, and the exchange effected, into another corps at Dublin.

Whatever Coventry's habits of extravagance may have been before; they were far exceeded now. Credit being more easily obtainable, and the opportunities for spending money, continually offering themselves in this gay city. The gay, the handsome Coventry was admired and sought after; and many were the inquiries about "who that handsome young fellow was," as he, with a knot of three or four other men, took the usual promenade in Sackville Street. The society he kept was generally that of men far richer than himself, and whose habits were of the wildest description. The first six months passed very pleasantly. Tradesmen never even asked for payment. Pretty girls with a very small portion of brogue and fortune, smiled on our hero, procured invitations for him to all the private parties, and credit was easily obtainable. But now a change came over all these delights. Bills began to come in, and credit became harder to find; now the old fears of bailiffs and arrests once more disturbed his peace of mind, and the saunters in Sackville Street were less frequent and less pleasant.

He had written to his uncle more than once for assistance, and had received a short, sharp note in reply, giving a cheque for about one tenth the sum required. The writer refusing to give more, and

complaining of having been very ill with determination of blood to the head, which, he added, "you might have heard of before, had you taken any interest in me." Under these circumstances, Coventry could not tell what to do. That the money must be paid he knew; but in what manner it was to be raised, was a most decided enigma. A begging letter sent to the uncle was not replied to, and there seemed nothing left but to sell.

Deeply did he begin to regret the foolish life he had hitherto led, now that sober reason gained its sway. Here was he some thousands in debt, and had not one single thing worth a ten-pound note to shew for it. His fast friends were not now always so glad to see him; particularly when they found out that his share of the expenses was paid with difficulty, or not at all. From his brother officers he could expect but little sympathy, as he had never much courted their society; and from the usual resort of the uncle, there was not the slightest hope of assistance.

It was a dark sort of day, as Coventry sat over the fire in his room, pondering on his difficulties, when a letter was put into his hands by his servant, having just come by post.

Duns by post had been pretty frequent lately; and as Coventry considered this to be one, he tossed it carelessly unopened on to the table, and resumed his meditations. These having been indulged in

for some time, the unopened letter was then remembered; and after some comments on the post mark, "London," and the "d—d cramped hand the fellow writes," the contents were perused.

The reading took but a short time; but the letter instead of being thrust into the fire with the poker, as was usual with his epistles, was carefully folded and put in his desk.

"Poor, dear, old man!" said Coventry half aloud, "he is gone; well, I wish I had behaved differently to him; but I always thought he was better off. It is really more than I deserve, his leaving me so much; but how lucky it has come. Well, I must answer the letter, I suppose, and then make some arrangements with these rascally shop fellows." Thus saying, Coventry acknowledged the receipt of the letter; and at the same time, expressing a wish that some portion of the money might be immediately sent, as his circumstances imperatively demanded it.

The letter he had received, ran thus :—

"Dear Sir,

"It is with no ordinary feelings of regret, that I have to inform you of the sudden death of your uncle, John Coventry Esq., who expired suddenly at his breakfast table two days ago.

"All arrangements regarding the disposal of his property and his funeral have been made by his

nephew, Mr. Ellis, and myself agreeably to directions given in the deceased gentleman's will.

"His loss will be felt by all, and by none more severely than yourself. But if money has the power, in even the slightest manner to mitigate sorrow, you may find a solace in hearing that, by his will, you are entitled to the absolute disposal of five thousand pounds in the three per cents reduced.

"The whole of Mr. Coventry's fortune did but little exceed £16,000; which is thus disposed of. Your cousin, George Ellis, £5,000; to yourself, £5,000; and to each of your sisters, £3,000; the small legacies, legal expenses, &c., &c., will consume the balance beyond these sums.

"The funeral takes place the day after to-morrow; but to which I imagine you will be unable to come, owing to the delay in writing to you, which was unavoidable. Expecting an early answer.

"I remain,

"Yours truly,

"JAMES MASTERS.

"Executor."

As the letter said there was no time for Coventry to be at the funeral, he remained at Dublin, really feeling a good deal for the poor old man so suddenly taken from him.

Coventry appeared to wake as from a dream, and resolved that his future life should be passed to

somewhat better advantage than it had hitherto been; and likewise determined to make his narrow income cover all his wants; but this he clearly saw never could be done with his present regiment, or in Dublin.

In due time the legacy was received, and an arrangement entered into with his creditors, by which his debts were discharged and he once again a free man. The balance left in his hands was so little, as to necessitate a most rigid economy, or to cause an exchange into some regiment in the Colonies.

This latter plan appeared preferable, and hearing of a favourable opportunity, he effected an exchange into the — Foot, at that time stationed at Berhampore in Bengal.

A year passed over—Coventry had obtained his company, and was considered by his regiment as the beau ideal of an officer. Few were greater favourites than he, both with the men and with every one in the station. Nothing could be well done, or indeed got up at all without Captain Coventry had the principal hand in the management; and under his directions did theatricals, picnics, and re-unions, flourish.

Few were better shots, or could ride a pig so well. Although but little more than a year in India, yet more than one tiger had fallen to his rifle, and he had already become known in sporting circles.

Berhampore was well situated for a sportsman.

The dense jungle under the hills at no great distance from cantonments, being pretty full of game, from the royal tiger and fierce wild buffalo, to the dainty snipe and florican. To have sport with these, was the general amusement to such as could obtain leave during the short cool season.

For this purpose, it was usual about the month of January for large parties to meet at some place convenient; and having seen everything correct, to then start for the foot of the hills, and commence shooting.

These parties were formed from the residents in and about the station, whilst often a large number came up from Calcutta to join in the sport. Gentlemen were not always left to each other's society on these occasions, as many of the ladies, tired of the dull and monotonous life led in cantonments, lent their society to that of the sterner sex; and for their accomodation, the largest tents and every imaginable comfort and luxury were provided.

The ladies worked, read, and enjoyed the cool delicious freshness of the air; whilst their lords and masters, with numerous elephants and beaters, were a few miles off searching every patch of jungle for tigers or wild hog.

One of these parties had been arranged by the head civilian at Berhampore; and the necessary elephants, horses, &c., &c., having been obtained

from the Moorshedabad Nawab, all determined to enjoy themselves to the utmost.

In the Berhampore party, of course Captain Coventry was included, and great things were expected of him, both from his good riding and unerring aim. The Calcutta party was large, having several ladies in the train, all of whom were well-known to the residents of Berhampore, but perfect strangers to Coventry.

The party met at Rureah, to which place the servants, tents, elephants, and all requisite things had been sent days before, both from Calcutta and Berhampore.

To Coventry's surprise, who should he be introduced to, they being of the Calcutta party, but Mrs. Phillips and with her was Miss O'Neale! Of their being even in India he did not know, or did they for a moment suppose that he was in the country also, much more at Berhampore. However, as things happened, there was no help for it; and Mrs. Phillips, anxious to relieve her niece and Coventry from their confusion, said loud enough for the others to hear,

"Well, Mr. Coventry, who would have thought of seeing you here. Have you been long in India?"

Coventry's reply shewed the bystanders that Mrs. Phillips, Miss O'Neale, and himself had been old acquaintances; and after some desultory conversation, the party broke up. The gentlemen going to

see after their horses and guns, and the ladies to various employments, leaving Coventry and Mrs. Phillips alone in the tent.

Soon an explanation of this meeting was given, and received on both sides. By it, Coventry discovered that Miss O'Neale had but a few months ago arrived in Calcutta, and was to proceed in a short time up country to join her father, who was holding an appointment in the Hills. Miss O'Neale having, by the death of her kind aunt in Worcestershire, been left without a home, had according to her father's wish come out to India, and was stopping for some time with her aunt, the agent's wife, in Calcutta.

These kind of parties were to Mrs. Phillips a great source of pleasure, first because she obtained a little fresh air and novelty, and secondly, because it gave her husband a few day's absence from the everlasting office, and the confinement incidental to the sphere of life he had chosen. She had had some little difficulty in persuading Miss O'Neale to accompany them, as gaiety was a thing not much sought after by that young lady. However, seeing that not consenting would probably prevent her aunt accompanying Mr. Phillips, she had agreed to go, and the result was this meeting with Coventry.

The meeting between Coventry and Mary was rather awkward; and both parties felt themselves embarrassed. However, ere long this feeling wore

away; and before evening, Coventry had reinstated himself in favour with Mrs. Phillips, and had been quite forgiven by Mary, to both of whom he apologized for his rudeness, and apparent want of feeling at Wennington. As for Mr. Phillips, beyond mere civility, he paid but little attention to any of the party.

Next day at an early hour the camp was astir; and after a hurried breakfast, the gentlemen proceeded to beat up for pig. Before the day was over many a tusker had breathed his last. Coventry's riding was thought much of, and three boar had fallen under his spear. Some few accidents occurred though nothing very serious, and two horses were ripped, owing to the bad riding of their owners. The day ending, the party returned to the tents, finding dinner ready soon after their arrival.

Each day the sport was varied, until at the end of a week, game became so scarce as to necessitate a removal of the camp deeper into the jungle. For this purpose all the tents were struck, and with the servants, elephants, &c., &c., packed off to the new encamping ground.

It had been determined that such ladies as might like to ride, should accompany a party of gentlemen, who volunteered to be their escort and guides to the new camp; and as the whole country abounded with wild hog and small game, most of the gentlemen carried their hunting spears and guns along

with them, hoping to have an opportunity of using them en route.

The week gone bye had not been entirely given up to sport by Captain Coventry, but the last two days had been passed chiefly in the society of Mrs. Phillips and Mary. By the last he had never been entirely forgotten, and now that he once again spoke of love, she felt more deeply attached to him than ever. She now knew and could see his faults, which were by no means few; but observed that these had been considerably lessened by his uncle's death, and his exchange to India.

Mrs. Phillips and her husband could offer no objection to the engagement, and most pleasantly did time pass with all parties. Among the equestrian party were Mrs. Phillips and Miss O'Neale, of course under the immediate escort of Coventry, who, spear in hand, rode at Mary's side; his steed the best bit of blood the desert could produce, which arching its neck, and bounding from side to side, appeared as if it partook of no small portion of the joy which filled its master's heart.

The road lay along the banks of a sluggish stream, deep and dark, winding its way between high mud banks, the dense foliage on which here and there almost concealed the water. It was in a part of this stream, rather more open than hitherto, that Coventry saw seated on the bank a large vulture, at which he threw his spear, saying at the time of

doing so, "Come, I'll wager a rupee that I hit him." However, his eye was untrue, for the spear, missing its object, glanced from the bank and buried itself to a very small depth in the stream below.

Coventry's groom slipped down the bank, and with ease reached the end of the spear; but his foot slipping, he fell into the water and immediately disappeared beneath the surface. The next instant, Coventry springing from his Arab, was plunged deep in the dark waters, anxiously searching for the poor native whose death he considered was caused by his folly. Twice had Coventry dived, and as often risen to the surface, asking from those on the bank "if they had seen the native;" but receiving a reply in the negative, he had prepared for further search, when raising his arms suddenly high above his head with a look of agony, he uttered a piercing skriek and instantly was lost to view. The blood-stained water shewed what had been his fate, and that perhaps whilst they were now looking at the placid surface—the man, who but a few minutes before elate with new hopes and health, envied by all, was at that present moment being dragged limb from limb by the relentless shark or alligator down in the dark waters below.

All that men could do, situated as they were, was done to recover the body of poor Coventry, but without effect. At length evening closing in, they

all left the dread spot, and arrived ere long at the tents.

To describe poor Mary's feelings would be impossible. The imploring look still seemed before her, and the scream of agony yet rang in her ears. She rode helplessly away from the sad scene, between Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, who tried with kind words to lighten the awful blight cast on poor Mary's life. All, everything was unheeded; her thoughts were with the dead, deep at the bottom of the dark, dreary stream. Almost mechanically she kept her seat on horseback, and appeared unaware of having been lifted off on arrival at the tents.

Two days passed thus, Mrs. Phillips becoming alarmed, determined no longer to wait for the steamer to return to Calcutta, but hastened to that city with her niece, whose life for several long weeks trembled in the balance. At length a change for the better occurred, and then a strong constitution, with careful nursing, tended to restore poor Mary once more to strength, but her spirits had gone for ever. Often when alone, sitting with the window open, so as to admit the fresh sea breeze on her yet fevered frame, would her thoughts revert to the fearful scene and mangled lover, whilst the big tears chased each other down her pallid cheek. Poor girl, how often did she wish she was once again in dear Worcestershire, and could but once more hear the sweet inspiring tones of her, who now slept in the icy grasp

of death far away. At Colonel O'Neale's desire, his daughter, as soon as strong enough, left Calcutta for the Hills, and ere long was folded in the arms of her devoted parent.

This dreadful affair had the effect of breaking up the sporting party, and each person composing it was soon at their posts; some making money, others losing it. The military returned to cantonments, the civilians to their offices, and the ladies to their respective homes. The catastrophe served for something to talk about for some days, and then gave way to something more terrible or more novel.

The appointment held by Colonel O'Neale, caused him frequently to be absent in the interior of the Hills for weeks together. His time, on these occasions, being occupied in surveying roads, bridges, and public buildings. In some of his inspections on works near his head-quarters, he had often been accompanied by his daughter; but as the roads in the interior were dangerous and difficult to travel on, she had never ventured very far from home. However, having been nearly two years a resident in the Hills, and short trips giving her courage, she determined on being the companion of the Colonel on a trip he was desired to take across the snowy range into Kunawur.

Miss O'Neale was fully aware of the difficulties in a trip of this sort; but having heard from those who had been there of the grandeur of the scenery,

and the beauty of the climate, she resolved to surmount all difficulties and judge for herself.

At the end of a week all necessary arrangements were made, and the Colonel with Miss O'Neale started on their first march towards the snow. This being along a good road was accomplished without difficulty or accident, as were some eight or nine miles more; at the end of this distance, the road became a mere path, and in some places not even that, so the ponies were sent back, and it was decided that the remaining marches should be performed on foot.

Both father and daughter, for the first day or two, missed the use of the ponies, and found the constant ascent or descent extremely fatiguing. Soon the limbs and lungs got stronger, and by the time they had reached their journey's end and crossed the snow, both were nearly incapable of feeling fatigue.

The duty on which Colonel O'Neale had been dispatched, having been accomplished, he and his daughter prepared to return to their head-quarters, but over a different pass in the snowy range to which they had come, and indeed by altogether a different route.

Road there was none; on approaching the pass, the dirty snow shewed marks of other footsteps, and these with the aid of a guide, served to point out the way. After ten hours hard toil, sometimes knee deep in melting snow, the party found themselves

resting for the night at a small village some ten miles advanced on this side the pass. The inhabitants of this Booteas, who only resided there in the summer, hearing of their coming, brought a goodly supply of wood and milk—so that on Mary's arrival, the blazing fire and refreshing cup of tea, soon made her forget the misery she had undergone; and in her happy mind, even caused that dreary, snowy mountain pass to appear less gloomy.

The next day's march was of a somewhat similar nature, though not so long, or with so much snow. The path led for the first few miles along the edge of the precipice, at the foot of which, but at such a distance as to be invisible from the road, rushed and boiled a mountain torrent; across this their route lay.

After following the narrow path for some miles in a direction parallel with the river, it turned abruptly over the mountain, and eventually wound round, until lost in the rocks and stones through which the torrent had cut its way.

Across this river from one bank to the other, suspended high above the water, which rushed in masses of white foam beneath, was one of the light bridges of that part of the country, called Sungas, composed of grass, rope, and bamboos; strong enough for the purposes required of them, viz: to bear the weight of a few sheep laden with saltpetre, and the clumsy, good-natured men, their owners.

To those unaccustomed to cross by one of these, the feeling on doing so is something fearful, as there is no railing, or indeed anything beyond a thin rope reaching to the knees, to prevent a person, when giddy, from falling headlong into the awful depths below. Some of them have the flooring slippery, from the spray of the torrent below dashing up over it; and in others, the wood work of the floor is composed of fir twigs tied together, and placed at such distances apart, as to render the act of walking across no easy matter; more particularly as the eye gets confused with seeing the river rushing beneath through the open spaces.

The one over which the Colonel and his daughter had to pass was of the latter description, but stronger made than usual, having indeed a railing; but as this was little more than a foot high, it served for no other purpose than to keep the sheep from being pushed into the river as they came over loaded with salt.

Miss O'Neale having frequently, during her trip, crossed by these bridges, had no fear in the present instance, and with the Colonel proceeded slowly across—both stopping in the middle to look down on the sea-green river rushing beneath them.

"How grand it is!" said Mary, "I could stop and watch this torrent all day."

"Yes, Mary;" said her father. "One would think the Booteas had made this bridge on purpose

for people to loiter on and admire the scenery, for see how strong it is." And he stamped hard on the fragile affair with his foot.

"It is like a tight rope," said Mary, as she sprung lightly a little distance upwards; but scarcely had she done so, when crash and snap went the few twigs and dry grass of which it was principally composed, and the fragments with Colonel O'Neale and Mary were hurled into the dreadful foaming river.

A few minutes desperate struggling with death, and Colonel O'Neale found himself dashed against a ledge of rocks, up which he succeeded in climbing. But where was Mary? Alas! carried far, far, away; bruised and lifeless, the sport of every wave!

Assistance was procured, and the Colonel rescued from his perilous position. He remaining at the village on the shore, until tidings could be brought regarding his daughter, although of her fate he doubted not; the difficulty of his own escape, proving to him how improbable it would be for her to have been equally fortunate.

His anxieties and mental tortures were relieved on the third day, by the bruised and mangled body of his dear and only child being brought to the village. It having been washed ashore miles away among the green fir trees smiling in the beautiful valley at their feet.

On a father's sorrows we will not intrude. Beneath a sturdy pine the poor young girl was placed.

The heart-broken father himself reading the service for the dead, over the daughter so soon and so awfully taken away from him.

A small cairn of stones was raised, and that with the alpine fir serve to mark the spot where poor Mary is placed.

The Colonel returned to his head-quarters, a childless and heart-broken man. For him now, earth had no joys, life no pleasures. His heart was with her buried beneath the pine in the far north. Much did he long to join her; and ere the year elapsed, when called upon to do so, Death found in him no unwilling victim.

CHAPTER XXV.

"WELL, Doctor," said the Adjutant, entering the queer built affair called the mess-house, "I wish I had come earlier, and heard rather more of your tale, than the melancholy end of this Colonel; but tell me, how is it that all your stories have such a lachrymose tendency, and the wind-up is generally awfully terrible?"

"Oh I don't know," replied the Medico. Then assuming a melancholy expression, he continued, "My mind, I suppose, inclines to grief, as it suits me well to mingle now, in scenes that never pleased before."

"Poor fellow," interrupted Elliot, "yours is certainly a grievous state; and is, I should imagine, to be attributed to some crime or another, committed before you came to India, such as highway robbery, child murder, or more probably, it being in your line, body snatching. Love it couldn't be."

"No," replied the Doctor, "none of these; or can I account for the lachrymose turn to my stories. As to love, I was once spooney; but during that

interesting period, felt very jolly, got quite stout, and had an appetite most unromantic and unpoetical."

"I hope," said Ewart, "you had more luck in your love affair than Elliot here, who was observed, about three years ago, to wander about in a distracted manner, to sigh like a pair of broken bellows, and to look so suicidical, that it was almost determined to place a corporal's guard over him, when suddenly, a change came over the spirit of his dreams; once more he smiled, and was restored to the bosom of his family, which means the mess. On inquiry into the cause of all this, we discovered that the unfortunate wretch had fallen in love with a little nigger girl; but his proposal of marriage was refused by her flinty-hearted governor, who determined on not taking a man as son-in-law, who, in that gent's language, "Tea-pot not got, buggy not got, but plenty debt got."

"What nonsense," interrupted Elliot, "I never did anything of the sort. They always laugh at me, because when we were at Moradabad, I was particular in my attentions to a lady possessing much of the tar brush in her complexion; but I never thought of a proposal."

"Oh yes," said two or three voices, "all very fine to deny it now."

"Particularly," added the Adjutant, "after the refusal by the angry governor."

"But to change the subject," said Ewart, "I

am the bearer of good news, and as it will be in to-day's orders, tell it you all beforehand. Now, what do you say to a hill campaign? Orders have come to join the Jullundur Brigade; and walk off to Cashmere after the Sheik Emanodeen. That capital fellow, who very properly, in my humble opinion, refuses to give up Cashmere at our bidding."

"Hang the thing," said the Giant, "we have had lots of powder lately, and I rather like it; but going at these poor Cashmerees, is not the sort I bargain for. I never liked the way it was given in the first instance, or can I see what right we had to give it. Oh, the vale of Cashmere, it will be pleasant enough to pass a hot season or two up there; but I don't want to do so with Goolab as ruler."

"As for me," said another, "I have nothing to do with the rights and the wrongs of a thing. Being a soldier, I am forced to draw my sword for my employers, putting my feelings in my pocket; one need not be so very particular. As for the matter of that, a good deal of this precious hot country has been obtained in somewhat a disreputable manner. I am much more concerned at again going campaigning under our new C.B., that affable man, Blowhard."

"So we shall," said Elliot, "well, I did hope Sobraon would have been the last of him, and yet, 'here we are again,' as the clown at Astley's informs

the public. What bother there will be, picket duty, pipe-clay, and Blowhard. Ugh! there's nothing for it but beer. So, Bearer, beerlou;" and the servant proceeded to bring the bottle of Allsop, under the soothing influence of which, Blowhard and picket duty appeared less horrible.

Three days after this we were off, and proceeded without anything particular occurring until we reached Jummoo, the seat of government of Goolab Sing. Here a great fuss was made with us for three weeks, at the end of which time, the Sheik, having thrashed *our friend* twice, gave himself up to the authorities at Lahore, by whom he was exculpated, and given a place of emolument and note.

As soon as Goolab Sing had it his own way, then diminished the little polite attentions to us taking care of his capital. No longer were apples, walnuts, &c., &c., sent to the mess for the Sahib loque. No longer did Jack Sepoy find ghee cheap, and big cucumbers common, but all had to be paid for at exorbitant prices; and even the very fish swimming in the river washing the city, became sacred, and as such, it was hoped they would be respected. This was asking and expecting too much, so our few remaining days were passed minus apples and walnuts, but with an abundant supply of the finny tribe, the result of my own and other's skill.

A few days before we left, we were all agreeably surprised by Old Blowhard, or Colonel Johnson, C.B.

informing us that he had determined on retiring; and would make over command of the Regiment to the next senior officer. This was done; and then, to the joy of all, the Colonel departed, with the good wishes of all, but to the grief of none. In him, no one had found a friend, his idea of a commanding officer, being so totally opposed to gentlemanly feeling, as to make all under him dislike and despise him; to sum him up, he was, as poor Paddy Blake remarked, "a good Sergeant Major spoiled."

On joining head-quarters of the division, we had hopes of being allowed to return to our former station in the Doab, and occupy the houses we had been building during our six months there. But some order having, either through a dodge or mistake been issued, holding out larger allowances to men serving in the Punjaub than elsewhere, it was considered advisable to rescind the same, and relieve the corps across the Sutlej. Thus were the officers heavy losers by houses, furniture, &c., though, of course, they were to blame for building; as "tents were good and cool enough for them," according to the kind ideas of their superior, who immediately on the intense heat setting in, retired to his mountain home, Simla.

Unavoidable expenses such as these will occur, besides step purchasing, marching, and horses will not live or last for ever. Yet, in England a man is

blamed for being in debt when holding a commission in India. The authorities, whose chief care is to live at Simla, receive large allowances, and save each possible penny, aid this English outcry by fulminating absurd orders, and refusing to give employ to any whose income is not entirely at their own disposal, *i. e.*, to men in debt.

In the relief we found ourselves down for Meerut, and in due course of time reached that agreeable and healthy station, well pleased with all we found there. But, unfortunately, for the lovers of gaiety, it was the close of the cold weather when we arrived, so many of the fair sex, and a few of the sterner, had betaken themselves to the mountain retreat of Mussouree. Still the weather was tolerably cool, and enough of Nature's perfect handiwork were left to allow some little amusement to be continued, to cause speculation and scandal as to proposals and marriage days, and to keep the hand in of the lady killer and professed caller.

Few of these fair creatures were practised upon as much as the Widow Le Blanc, and few enjoyed an innocent flirtation more, or could give and take better than she. Indeed, Mrs. Le Blanc was rather famous in the station for her readiness of reply and kindness of manner to such gentlemen as were without incumbrances in the way of wives, and whose good looks or agreeable manners made them somewhat run after. To go and pass an hour with

the widow, was considered a capital plan for killing time; and then, I regret to say, it was not uncommon to repeat all her witticisms and replies, for the especial benefit and edification of a select party at the billiard-room or mess-table.

Many a young man had from first been attentive, increased his affections until they, to use that hacknied phrase, ripened into regard; but had been deterred from absolute proposal by fear of ridicule, or perhaps a sort of inward conviction, that a widow who could be so generally kind, might continue her favours as a wife. Not so, however, the large man Elliot, who cared for none of these; but after a few weeks passed in numerous calls, escorting her to the band, and doing all those little offices (which shew to all interested in such things, that the gentleman is far gone in spooniness, though he, poor soul, is of course perfectly innocent all the time), proposed in due form, and was accepted; but not until the usual and requisite show of modesty and reserve had been observed by the widow.

For a fortnight all went well, Elliot was the most constant of men, left off bad habits, attending parades regularly and punctually, and dangled at his innamorata's side, in a manner delightful to contemplate. No more was the Giant's song called for on public nights at mess. The poor Giant's tongue was tied, for report said he had promised the widow to abstain from tobacco and brandy. Certes, without

these adjuncts poor Elliot's pipe was choked. Jokes on the circumstances passed unheeded, and all mourned a "good fellow that's gone."

During this period, that hydra-headed monster, scandal, was not silent. Many were the reports flying about of all not going on smoothly between the happy pair. Some said that the widow was as much involved as her future lord; and others going further, declared they had been witness to a regular row on the course, about some old lover being "at home" all day. But there was no proof. Elliot came less often to mess, and wandered about in a melancholy state; again appearing, as Ewart said, "once more in the character when rejected by the negress."

Thus affairs proceeded, when one day after tiffin, the old familiar cheroot case was once more seen to glide from the corner pocket, and an order given for brandy and water. To the remarks of lookers-on, no reply was given, until at the end of the second glass of brandy and water, Elliot informed all, "That it was all off, and that he was glad of it." Further information he refused, and after smoking in silence, proceeded to the billiard-room, under a sharp fire of facetiæ, chiefly composed of garbled extracts of Sam Weller's remarks, regarding marrying widows, and the peculiar propensities supposed to exist in that class of the genus woman.

That evening was a public night, and none were

there more uproarious than Elliot; he sang his song, and took bantering and joking most good-temperedly; satisfying himself by way of reply to the numerous questions put to him, by saying, "Why it was a bad job, and as she chose to break it off, why, of course, I had no objection. So, there, like good fellows, drop the subject, for it is not the pleasantest in the world to me."

"But," called out Wharton, a young fellow by no means a favourite with the regiment, "what a spoon you must be! Fancy getting jilted by that old hack. Why she has tried half the army, and all the civilians; and yet, I don't believe, until you treated her to such a thing, she has ever screwed a proposal out of any one of the lot."

"Perhaps, Mr. Wharton," replied the Giant, "you will keep a civil tongue in your mouth, and mind your own affairs, or I will try the effect of kicking on you."

"What!" demanded Wharton, "what do you say?"

"Oh!" coolly replied Elliot, "you didn't hear; then allow me to repeat it. I shall kick you, if you do not hold your tongue and mind your own business."

"Lieutenant Elliot," angrily spoke Wharton, "I will not take this; apologize. You presume on your size. By G—d, I'll stand this from no man!"

"Not at all presuming," said Elliot. "I consider

it is your insignificance has protected you so long; and so if you don't like the expression, you may do as you like. Deuce of an apology do you get out of me."

"Sir, Sir!" screamed Wharton; and the next instant, an empty bottle was sent hissing through the air to the place where Elliot was sitting, but missing its intended victim, smashed to atoms against the adjacent wall. A scene of confusion ensued, and the party soon after broke up; not, however, before it was whispered about, that friends had been unable to make up the quarrel, and that the two would meet in a duel early next morning.

The spot usually selected for these exhibitions of barbarism, is known as behind the butts; and to that sheltered, but rather odoriferous locality did the duelling party resort, at an early hour on the morrow.

The first to arrive were Elliot and his second, Ewart; the principal looking cool and good-tempered. Then came the other two interested parties, the second carrying a rather ominous-looking box under his arm, which appeared to be watched by Wharton with quite a jealous regard, who, angry still from the injury he had received, scarcely acknowledged the civil "good morning" said to him by Ewart.

Some short time elapsed during a conference held

between the seconds, when Ewart, as spokesman for both, coming forward, said:

"Don't you think, gentlemen, this is a horrible and stupid thing to do, to go and blaze into each other about such stuff as occurred last night? What say you to a mutual apology?"

"For my part," replied Elliot, "I am willing to apologize, provided Mr. Wharton does the same to me, for the way he spoke of the late affair between myself and Mrs. Le Blanc, and also for his bad shot at my head with the bottle."

"Not I, Mr. Ewart; I have not come all this way to give or receive an apology," responded Wharton.

"Very well then, Ewart," said Elliot, "get the affair over sharp, and observe what has occurred. I won't offer an apology twice."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE medical man having taken up his position, (of course quite innocent of what was going on, his object being study of botany or nature, behind the place usually occupied by the bugler at target-practice), and the men placed, the word "to fire" was given. After receiving his adversary's shot, Elliot discharged his pistol in the air, and advanced towards Wharton, saying, "That he was sorry for the occurrence," and offered his hand.

"Back, Sir," said Wharton. "I've a right to another shot, and by Heavens, I'll have it!"

"Very good, Sir," quietly returned Elliot, "you shall have it;" and they were again placed opposite to each other.

At the word "Fire," both pistols were instantaneously discharged, and with a groan, Wharton fell heavily on his knees. Then emerged the medical man from his hiding-place, and anxious questions asked and answered. Wharton was hit in the thigh, the bone broken.

After being carefully bandaged, he was placed, a helpless cripple, in the same buggy in which, but one short hour before, he had arrived full of life, and, I fear, hopes that the result of the morning's enterprise would place his old companion and brother officer, in a similar, if not a worse predicament; and that he, uninjured, might yet live to be revenged and gratified, with having taken that which he never gave, and certainly could not restore, viz.: a fellow-creature's life.

For weeks was the life of Wharton despaired of; an irritable temper, combined with a dangerous wound, kept him for a long period in a most precarious state. During this time, none watched so assiduously near the bed-side of the wounded man as Elliot; nor could the sneers of the patient, during his short fits of sanity, or the imprecations on his name during delirium, cause one moment's abatement of kindness or attention.

Slowly Wharton improved, and with returning strength the desire for revenge appeared to increase. But his insults and tauntings were passed over unnoticed by Elliot, who, now seeing all danger passed, made his visits less frequent, and at length desisted from them altogether; not, however, before he had explained to the limping duellist, that having been the cause of so dangerous an illness to him, he considered that it was but doing his duty in watching and attending in his chamber. But now that

all danger had passed he would no longer intrude, and hoped the past might be forgotten and forgiven.

This Wharton would not listen to, but upbraided him in language, which, under any other circumstances, would have obtained for him then and there a corporal punishment; for this the strong man, his hearer, was very capable of inflicting. But the duel had altered the man, and as he closed the door in the face of the enraged Wharton, he simply said, "God forbid, Wharton, that I should ever fight another duel; he has blessed me in sparing your life."

This duel threw a gloom over the whole station, as the precarious state of Wharton made all fear for Elliot; whose conduct at and before the duel, was approved of in every quarter. Few indeed would have grieved for Wharton had he died during that long, long illness. But his death would bring heavy penalties to the causer; some indeed fearing it might be as much as life for life, for a fatal duel about the same time occurring in England and another near Calcutta, had so inflamed the public mind against duelling, as to cause little allowance to be made for provocation. Now that Wharton was well again, or as well as he ever would be, it was hoped that Elliot would shake off the melancholy that appeared to have settled on him, and once again join in the gaiety of cantonments and the pleasures of the mess-

table; but no, not now had these anything to please. The long time spent so lonely with the sick man had taught him to use his reason, and to discover the utter uselessness of squandering his money in such frivolities, and his short span of life in so careless and thoughtless a manner as he had hitherto been accustomed to do.

With the cold weather, arrived officers from the Hills, and with them came their wives and daughters, whose unsucessful campaign in the Hills was to be counterbalanced by the greatest possible success in this the Montpellier of India. Their advent was the signal for circulars to be sent, calling on residents to subscribe to balls, picnics, races, and theatricals. So what between these things, reviews, and heavy dinners, the cold weather glided away too quickly, and the hot season again commenced, though without all the lovely fair ones having changed their names. Not but what more than one had been made happy through the aid of Mother Church, and the fair one's mother as happy, being now willing to do the same kind offices for any one else's daughter, which had proved so successful with her own. Some still remained on hand, not even in that interesting predicament termed engaged. But hope deserted them not, for had they not still Mussouree before them, and men were tolerably plentiful still.

Mrs. Le Blanc was 'at home' as usual, witty as

ever, and if possible, kinder. Indeed so truly amiable, that it was wonderful no one proposed, or even now was more than passing civil; but after the duel and Elliot's engagement, few were inclined to pay attention. Her own sex, particulary the spinster portion, said, "she was a horrid bold woman, and ought to have known better than to encourage a young man, and then have a duel about her!"

Scandal said, "they envied her the éclat of the duel." But they might, without jealousy, have let her keep that or any other little notoriety supposed to be of value, for she was not likely to prove an obstruction to the disposal of any in the muslin market.

Once more the general orders were filled with the names of those fortunate enough to possess the means or the interest to get away from their regiment, and for different periods be permitted to visit the Hills. Among these to whom leave was granted, appeared the name of Elliot; whose scanty means having been replenished by a timely present from home, and his debts paid, decided him on applying for leave to visit the Presidency preparatory to taking furlough to Europe. Then a party was made up to wish him farewell; and soon after the good-natured and once boisterous Elliot was wrapped in the arms of those who loved him far away in dear old England.

Elliot never returned to India; but entering College, took his degree and soon after obtained an

ill-paid curacy in a very large parish in Westmoreland. Here he found a field for his philanthropy and zeal. His energies were devoted to the reformation of the bad, to encourage the good, and to a general elevation of the mind and characters of those around him. Nor were his exertions in vain, for from a disorderly, discontented multitude, the lower orders of Ashfield became a sober and social community.

He still is at Ashfield, a married man, and few among the many good are more universally esteemed for integrity and virtue than Mr. and Mrs. Elliot.

The Adjutancy of the regiment now becoming vacant, I was selected for the appointment, and was not sorry to be elevated from the mere mud crusher of the parade ground, to having an allowance given me for the keep of a horse, who did this disagreeable duty for me. This Adjutancy, I was not long in discovering, was not the easiest berth in the world, for though there were advantages in being mounted on parade, receiving good allowances, and holding an improved position in the regiment; still these were a good deal counterbalanced by monotonous work, and being completely at the will of the commanding officer. However, I have little to complain of, fortunately for me during my incumbency, a *gentleman* commanded the corps, and his orders were willingly obeyed. Sometimes with the young hands it would be up hill work, and disagreeable when I was forced to let a youngster, and more than

once an older officer know, that I was no schoolmaster or spy; but as Adjutant it was my office to do my duty, and that consisted in seeing that the whole work of the regiment was properly performed.

Once, and only once, did I regret having the appointment, as it subjected me to gross abuse from a young man, at the time learning his drill, and whose years and experience of the world, as he termed it, ought to have made him act differently.

The language was so indecent, public, and unjustifiable, that I could hardly have accepted an apology without risk to myself; but the foolish fellow persisted in refusing my demand for one, and the matter was dealt with by the commanding officer. To avoid a court-martial, Ensign —— was advised to retire, and is now serving her Majesty as a private in the 30th Regiment Light Dragoons.

Poor fellow, the service was his bread; but a dislike taken to the country, soon after his arrival, had made him careless of consequences, and a naturally wilful temper and extravagant disposition, caused him to be impatient of control, and not particular regarding pecuniary matters. Like many others that I have observed, his knowledge of the world did not tend to make him more agreeable or more honourable, but rather the contrary. However, the blame rests not so much with these as with *parents* and guardians, who allow these lads of

seventeen or eighteen the liberty of men of twenty-two, thereby introducing them to scenes of vice and folly before their ages are sufficiently matured for them to perceive, that the life they are leading cannot ultimately be of the slightest use, but must unfit them for any respectable employ; and that this so-called knowledge of the world, would be better defined as a knowledge of many blackguards, many sinks of iniquity, of much more than they would like their virtuous mothers and sisters to know or imagine, and is no real knowledge whatever.

"I say, Villars," called out Captain Ewart, coming into my room in uniform. "What do you say to six months leave to the Hills, and a trip to the snow? you can get Stumps to act for you as Adjutant for half the allowance, and come away with me and have some boating and swimming at Nainee Tal; anything better than this heat, and none of that "Dhina dekh seedha saume chul," (look to the right, march straight.")

"Well," I replied, "I don't think it would be at all a bad arrangement, and I want a run from pipe clay; but it is so hard now a days for the regimental staff to get leave, and Stumps is so young in the service, that I doubt their allowing him to act."

"Oh, never mind about that," answered Ewart, "he is passed, and deserves something for that; let the other fellows grumble, but if they are too lazy to read, they must expect to be passed over. So

let's ask him to come over, and then we will drive over to the Colonel's and see if he will forward our applications."

Ensign Waller, or Stumps as he was generally termed, owing to a pair of very short legs, having arrived, the matter was discussed, and soon after we started for the Colonel. With him there was little difficulty, and in due course of time, we saw ourselves in General Orders as permitted to visit Kemaon and Gurwal with leave until the 15th October.

CHAPTER XXVII.

How refreshing the change from the hot-burnt up and dusty plains, to the beautiful cool air, green foliage, and azure sky of the lake Sanatarium. The change appeared little less than magical from extreme heat, to the temperature of a summer day at home. But two short hours before we had eaten our breakfast at the foot of the Hills in the steamy kennel known as Dak Bungalow, at Kalahdoongee, with the thermometer indicating 92°; and now we were picking violets under the shade of immense ivy-covered oaks, rhododendrons and Alpine pines. All looked so peaceful and placid. The white houses with their clematis-hung verandahs and slated roofs of the brightest blue, reflected in the clear transparent lake at their feet. Here towering up nearly three thousand feet above the lake was Cheena, its cypress-covered top partly concealed by a passing cloud. Then to the left, mountain rising upon mountain, in the dense foliage of the oaks and rhododendrons growing on their surface, nestled many a

pretty cottage. All this appeared like fairy-land, so suddenly had it burst on our view. Indeed, we had scarcely quite realized all, until we found ourselves seated in the rather dreary hotel at the further end of the lake, discussing a second breakfast, and future proceedings.

"Now, Ewart," said I, "come along out calling, and let us see if the beauty of the ladies is in keeping with that of the place. But first, who are the people living here?"

"A whole lot of ugly critturs I can tell you," said Ewart, smashing up in the cup the shell of his fourth egg. "Mrs Saveall is, I hear, perched up in the clouds somewhere, but Miss Segrave is with her, whom you must remember was at Meerut two years ago."

"Was she?" I asked. "Then come along, and let's order a couple of those ungroomed thick-legged ponies we saw for hire outside the gate. We can find out from Mrs. Saveall who are all here; by the bye, if I remember rightly, Miss Segrave was a pretty girl and danced well."

"Very fine, young fellow," laughed Ewart, "of course you cannot trust your memory on the subject; indeed it's rather dull than otherwise. Perhaps you didn't dance with her three or four times, and look the essence of spooney at the ball we gave to the station soon after arrival. To this she and her respected but ugly relative were invited."

"Perhaps I did dance more than once," I replied, "but cannot remember the spooney part of the business. At any rate, the effect must have been transient; however, now let us don the mufti and see how they look."

After a very hard pull up a very steep hill, on a winding road sheltered by overhanging rocks and trees, we stopped at the door of Caerwent Cottage, the verandah of which was hung with garlands of clematis, honeysuckle and dog-rose; round which hummed and fluttered myriads of bees and butterflies, all reminding us of many a similar scene far away in our native land, and adding in no small degree to our pleasure in all around.

Mrs. Saveall and Miss Segrave were at home; and proved pleasant and agreeable, the young lady rather improved in looks, and the old one, (if ever such a thing existed) not uglier. From them we discovered that there were several residents and visitors whom we knew, most of them living near each other, in houses the names of which were by no means euphonious or well called.

From Caerwent Cottage we proceeded to call on some of these residents, and returned heartily tired of climbing up hills to a late tiffin at the hotel. Then a sail over the lake, a bathe, dinner and to bed, sleeping soundly and cool, without the aid of punkas, tatties, and other abominations, absolutely necessary for existence in the very hot plains, which

we could see extending for miles, a few thousand feet below, looking awfully hot and dusty.

How the time appeared to slip away, what between pleasure parties, regattas, and pic-nics, three months out of the five, granted as leave, had glided away imperceptibly; and yet neither Ewart nor myself had thought of the trip to the snow. Our time had been so occupied with the amusements and pleasures of the lake, as to make us forget the full object of our visit; and now that the season was so far advanced, we determined on putting off the snow trip until some other time, and to continue as long as possible the very pleasant life we were leading. Moreover, the society at the lake was particularly agreeable, and most of the fair sex pretty.

None were more so than Miss Segrave, who, adding to this, possessed beauties of mind which found her many admirers, few, if any of them, more ardent than myself. Her accomplishments were many, and by no means, as is too generally the case with her sex, merely superficial. Besides a sweet voice, she was an excellent musician, and added a knowledge of the theory and practice of drawing, which would not have disgraced many a man who puts "professor" to his name. In many things we found a corresponding taste, and being, both in public and private, thrown much into each other's society, it was not long before I was what is called "head over ears in love."

Often at picnic parties would I induce her to accept my guardianship to some sheltered spot from whence a sketch could be obtained, and fair hand as I myself was with the pencil, frequently did I envy the skill that could make a picture with so little difficulty. More than once had we, seated, perhaps, at the foot of some monarch oak, gazed with mutual delight at the magnificent scenery around, until the red shade thrown upon the snowy peaks by the setting sun, warned us that our further absence would be noticed. Then would the hardly begun sketch be hastily finished, and ready for the inspection of the bright eyes that beamed with fun and a dash of malice on our return.

Thus passed the time. Soon, mornings became frosty and visitors scarce, leave began to expire, and the Māl deserted; seldom was heard the sound of oars, or the merry laugh, which told of a party of pleasure on the lake. The last picnic of the season was fixed, and then pretty, quiet Nainee Tal would be left in solitary beauty.

The small party, of whom the picnic was composed, had done full justice to the things provided; many a hearty laugh was heard, and many a regret expressed that all so soon would have to part, when I proposed to Miss Segrave that she should sketch the view from the little hill to the right. "The view from which," I added, "of the snowy range is really magnificent, as peak upon peak towers upwards.

On one side are the plains, looking as if they receded slowly, until lost in the haze of the distant horizon; then," continued I, warming with my subject, "for a foreground, there is the lichen covered rock, from which spring those lofty pines, whose dark green heads contrast so strongly with the blue above."

"How beautiful that must be, Mr. Villars!" said two or three voices.

"Yes, indeed," added Mrs. Saveall; "and as Mr. Villars describes it so well, let us request him to be our chaperon to the spot. Now, Mr. Villars, you must be showman as well as spokesman."

Thus appealed to, I had no help for it; but led the way to the spot with feelings not the most amiable towards Mrs. Saveall, who, by her proposition, had completely frustrated a little plan I had conceived of a tête-à-tête with Miss Segrave. Soon the exclamations of "It is really lovely!" and "How beautiful!" told me that I had not been far wrong in the estimation of scenery.

A new hope now arose in me, which was, that the party having strolled thus far, might be induced to continue scene-hunting, when I might probably be enabled to speak some words alone to Miss Segrave; but I was again doomed to disappointment, by the Saveall requesting I would make a sketch of the whole, putting in the party; adding, by way of inducement, "it will serve to remind us of many a pleasant day." A "please do," from Miss Segrave,

drove away my objections on the "want of time," and "capabilities of doing it justice," so I sketched away until the sun was hid behind Ayah Putthr's height.

A noisy, joyous party returned, all excepting myself, who, disappointed at the termination of the day's proceedings, joined not in the joke and laugh; but on the plea of a headache, refused to conclude the evening with music and tea at Colonel Graham's, so went home instead, angry with myself and everybody, but with Mrs. Saveall in particular.

There being but a few days more for my stay at the lake, I started early next morning, in no enviable mood, to make farewell visits. Still angry, but now more with myself than with others, for having, in refusing the Grahams' invitation, perhaps lost a chance of a private conversation with Miss Segrave; and also vexed at letting all know that I was defeated by Mrs. Saveall.

It is now a long time since all this occurred, but I do not forget how ill-tempered I was. Indeed, to the many houses at which I called, I must have been a particularly disagreeable visitor, for I scarcely spoke a word, and then only in short curt replies to questions. Indeed, my language was none of the most courteous or amiable; but my thoughts were far away, sometimes wandering to Caerwent Cottage, and then they would turn to the party of the previous day. Thus I went from house to house, making

myself very disagreeable, and feeling a kind of inward satisfaction at doing so. Poor, foolish fellow! little did I know at the time how great a donkey I appeared, and how very absurd I was considered; but then I was in love, and young men under such fearful circumstances, are not only often absurd to look at, but still more so in their proceedings.

The evening was spent in fruitless efforts to come across the occupants of the cottage, but as they stopped at home packing, and making preparations for their flight to the plains, my labour was thrown away; and I, at length, went home with but a small appetite for dinner, or for the joking remarks of Ewart, which were utterly devoid of wit, very personal, and decidedly vulgar. At any rate such was what I told him; but receiving in reply a hearty laugh and a dissertation on spooniness, with numerous extracts from that melancholy book called Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," I thought it best to be good-tempered and laugh too; so called it capital fun, and drank enough hot rum and water to drown care, and bring with it a glorious headache on the morrow.

Pit-a-pat, bump went my heart, when next day, calling at the cottage, I found Miss Segrave alone; and ere the Saveall returned to perform the part of dragon, I had said my say and been made happy, with the half whispered, "Yes, but," (there is always a but), "my aunt must be asked."

"Why?" said I "why, dearest Clara; what on earth has she to do with it? we are independent of her; surely you don't think her consent is absolutely nessessary?"

"Indeed, it must be," she answered, "I cannot accept without aunt's consent."

"A parcel of stuff," I angrily replied, "you can do it if you like, what business is it of her's who you marry? Dear, dearest Clara, do not think me violent, but that au—that ugly old woman, what can she have to do with our marrying?"

"Everything, Sir!" as you will discover," said the Saveall, opening the door, "Miss Segrave has behaved very properly in waiting my consent; and that you may be certain, you will never obtain," and she grinned horribly, looking intensely ugly and angry.

"Eaves-dropping," I sneered out, "well, listeners never hear any good of themselves; but your words go for nothing. I will appeal to Miss Segrave herself; surely she would never be a party to such a despicable trap as this has been, to get a proposal and then to make a fool of me."

"No," replied Mrs. Saveall, "It was no trap, or intended as such, you both talked loudly, and whilst in the next room packing, I heard my neice say, 'not without aunt's consent.' Your angry and lover like rejoinder could have been heard further; thank you, Sir, for the compliment, 'ugly

old woman,'" and the wretch bowed to me. "Yes, Sir, her consent *is* necessary, and as *it* is not given, perhaps you will be good enough to quit that 'ugly old woman's' house."

"Not before," said I, "Miss Segrave gives me her decision; Clara," I continued, addressing that young lady, "what do you say? will you allow yourself to be thus tyrannized over?"

"It is no tyranny," she said, "I told you aunt's consent was necessary, and must be obtained, or—"

"Or," said I interrupting her, "you refuse."

"Yes."

"Then, good-bye," I passionately exclaimed, pulling my hat over my eyes until nearly blinded, and striding out of the room. "Good-bye. I wish no worse fate may attend you, than is the usual lot of heartless flirts."

I was glad when once again at Kalahdoongee and with Ewart, on our way from the scene of so much vexation. He, like a good fellow, now ceased his jokes, and avoided the subject; perceiving by my irritable manner, and lack of mirth, that the course of true love had, as usual, not gone smooth. For myself, I was for some time too much vexed to feel the disappointment; but as my anger wore away, then would my fondness for her return with tenfold strength, and I would feel regret at not having submitted with patience to the domination of the aunt. It was not for months that I could

bring my reason to bear upon all that had occurred; and though an idea would spring up, that she had cared nought for me, and was cold and heartless, still I loved her too much to allow it to remain, and would blame myself for having asked too much. That she encouraged me, I could not help thinking; but perhaps it was on account of the similarity of taste between us. Excuses I made for her, the blame I took to myself; but as most things change with time, so did my opinion, and when able to talk the whole affair over with Ewart, and consider well over it myself, I became convinced that the beautiful Miss Segrave had amused herself at my expense; and however galling it might be to my pride to think so, still it was disagreeably evident, that she cared not for my love, but had succeeded to her heart's content in making a regular fool of Lieutenant Villars.

Love makes sad fools of men, and no doubt I did not act more wisely, or feel less than others similarly circumstanced; but owing to the breaking out of war in the Punjaub, and my regiment being one of the many selected for service, I had but little time left for brooding over my ill-luck or good luck, whichever the reader may choose to call it. War had been going on for some time, but as yet on no very extensive plan. Many officers resigning the remaining portion of their leave had joined their regiments; but Ewart and myself determined on enjoying the

cool air and glorious scenery of the Hills as long as possible, and arranged so that we could join at a minute's notice. This we took advantage of; and the day after my mishap, threw up the small remaining portion of our leave and two days, after were with the old corps, busy in procuring camels, buying tent pegs, and making those endless arrangements, inseparable from a sudden order to move.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Two days after arrival, we started for Lahore in the most blissful ignorance of any plans of the campaign, or indeed as to whether there would be any at all, though there could be but little doubt that there was hard fighting in store for some. Anxiety made us dread that the campaign, or rebellion as cant calls the throwing off the foreign yoke, would be closed, before we could reach the force already in the Punjaub—still there was a chance. For what with the siege of Mooltan, a row in the Jullundur Doab, Peshawur district in arms, with Lawrence and Bowie prisoners, reason might have told us that the force in that part of the country was quite inadequate to stem this torrent of rebellion.

Mooltan had resisted every effort at assault, indeed so determined had been the opposition made by the Dewan, and so weak were we, that a retrograde movement had been determined upon and executed. This Dewan Moolraj, the Governor of Mooltan, seemed to defy our efforts at reducing his stronghold,

and having but small mercy to expect after the base murder of Van Agnew and his assistant, had given out that sooner than surrender, "the ruined walls of the city should be his tomb and monument;" so preferring to die like a soldier and not by the hangman's hands, he fought desperately, notwithstanding the signal and complete defeat of his army on the 18th June—that mimic Waterloo, where Herbert Benjamin Bombastes took the Duke off to the life.

No halts were asked for or wished, only such made as were absolutely necessary both for the sake of the men and cattle. On, on, we pushed, each day more anxious, and more certain of glory yet to be won. Once again came picket duty and patrol, and though we were now in the Punjaub, yet no enemy had been seen; that they were hovering about, we were well informed both by spies, and by the frequent murders of such as strayed but a short distance from the camp. Once, indeed, we had stood to arms at midnight, expecting an attack; but nothing came of it, though next day a party of the enemy managed to get off with a considerable quantity of Commissariat camels, some of which were recovered after rather more talk than fighting on both sides.

Thus we marched always ready for the enemy, but seeing none; until at length we found ourselves pitched before the walls of Lahore, in which was now a strong garrison, and encamped round, several

thousand British troops, all anxiously waiting for the arrival of the chief from Simla, and to be led against the enemy, now mustering in force almost under the muzzle of our guns, there being but the river between us.

The next day we hoped for work, for we were ordered to cross and join some of our force in position. But no; there was nothing, indeed nobody except the last arrived regiments expected the fighting to commence before the advent of his Excellency, so all amused themselves with running backwards and forwards between camp and cantonments, playing cricket, and grumbling at ennui and picket duty.

Suddenly we marched in the direction of Wuzeerabad, at which place report said the enemy were collected some 3000 strong. As our force approached to less than a quarter of that, it was thought advisable to wait for reinforcements; but we marched again next day, and came within hearing, if not within sight of our enemy, for the report of a salute fired by him was distinctly heard.

Here we stopped, sometimes getting a sight of the enemy, but never much more. Once, indeed, the brave Holmes had a fling at them, but they feared close quarters, and deeming discretion the better part of valour, refused the invitation to come on, but cut for dear life instead.

"Lively work this," growled out our Major. "Here is the beer getting low, they tell me, and

we can't go back to Lahore to get any more, or go at that Shere Shing, who they say is at Ramnuggur waiting for us. Here am I, thirsty and worked to death grinding round those pickets night after night, and neither honour, glory, nor beer for a reward."

"All very fine," called out young Belleisle from the end of the tent. "You ought to try a turn at out-lying picket; such a lark, in a wet night, damp ground, and, no end of snakes, instead of doing the thing genteely from the outside of a horse. Ah, I wish I was a field officer, but, when "we're rich, we rides in chaises, and when we're poor we walks by"—no matter; I wonder what my fond and anxious parents would say, if they saw their only and much loved boy grinding out on a cold wet night to picket duty, with nothing to keep the rain off but an outfitter's cloak. Now, Major," concluded the youngster in a moralizing tone, "you see how advantageous your position is, and to what a poor innocent subaltern officer may be reduced."

"Oh yes, my lad," laughed out the Major. "I have had my turn at hard work. The trenches at Bhurtpore were not playthings, or was the Nepaul campaign. That *was* something to grumble at if you like, for we not only had pickets and devilments, but were jolly well licked in the bargain,"

"Hang it all," said Ewart, "I want to go at these fellows, there they are, and here we stick, they

would be the better for a licking, and we the better for thrashing them. As to picket, it isn't jolly, particularly on moist evenings, any more than going to bed in damp sheets, which, when juvenile, I was given to understand was not a contributor to health, but to be like Satan, avoided."

"Well," said I, overhearing Ewart. "At the old story growling, now we may drop that sort of fun for some days, as the Colonel just now sent for me, and has directed the regiment to be under arms at three to-morrow morning. The Brigade is to march in perfect silence somewhere. Now don't go and tell it all over camp, for fear it might reach the enemy, at whom I expect we shall go to-morrow."

"All right," said half-a-dozen voices, "we're ready," and then the grumbling party broke up to make those small preparations necessary before starting.

Bang, bang, went the Artillery next morning, at about eight o'clock, after we had been marching for three or four hours; louder and more frequent, came the booming of the Horse Artillery guns to us in the rear. Then came the order to move up, and we found ourselves staring at the enemy, who in turn did the same to us. But as the river Chenab ran between us, little else was done than stare and fire random shots at each other, few, if any of them,

taking effect. Some came near and over us, afterwards a lull, during which time the enemy emboldened by our contempt of them, sent a body of picket men across, they concealing themselves in and about some ravines, opened a galling fire on our Artillery. "Where are the Cavalry?" said half-a-dozen lookers on. When rattle of sabre, and the angry snort of the excited horses, said they were near. The shrill trumpet rang out the charge, and like lightning tore by the brave Dragoons. The brave old Moodkee Wallahs or 3rd, and the 14th crashed past, and were mingled with the foe. Now once again did the 3rd ride at the batteries, as at Moodkee and Ferozeshah; but the enemy had laid their traps too cleverly to be defeated by individual acts of bravery. Our brave fellows fought as only British soldiers can fight, but to no purpose, they were outmanned, and recalled, leaving the brave Cureton, Havelock, and others, far too good to be sacrificed in so small an affair, dead on the field. Holmes, too, a fine brave fellow, hit in the chest, whilst trying to rescue Cureton; also many others of less note, more or less injured.

The result of the day's work threw a gloom over the camp. The force halted on the ground, and performed the last sad offices to comrades, who but a few hours before were with life and hope, desiring to be led against the Sikhs; but now lay stiffened corpses

disfigured with many a ghastly wound, and looking more pale and ghastly in the dim moonlight by which they were buried.

Once more began the grumbling; an Englishman's privilege, and certainly as such taken advantage of. Nothing was heard but the growl at "those beggars of Sikhs being allowed to play long bowls at us across the river, and we stuck here throwing up entrenchments."

With us little occurred to break the monotony. Picket duty, trench work, and occasionally getting a man hit. A promise of a night attack did tend to break the sameness; but as Shere Sing thought better of it, why we remained "as you were," and hoped that a good time might be coming when we would be led across the river and settle this suspense one way or another.

At last the heavy guns being got into position and all ready, our batteries opened on the enemy across the river, all day did the great guns roar, and shot and shell come over and about us in return; but without any serious consequences, only a few on our side being placed hors de combat. A diversion to our left was, I believe, intended by the force under Generals Thackwell and Campbell, but did not come off as soon as expected. Night closed the day's amusements, and the enemy saved us further expenditure of shot and shell, by decamping and moving away further up the river so as to oppose the

crossing of the force under Thackwell. But that old officer was too sharp for him, and ere the day had given place to night, Shere Sing, the Sikh Commander-in-chief, was in full retreat for Jhelun, having previously received a sound thrashing as a means of hastening his movements.

Next day we crossed, and once again got regular meals, or to speak more correctly, something to eat; as many of both officers and men had for the three previous days, had little else than ration rum and biscuit, for Europeans; whilst we of the sable set fared still worse, getting very nearly nothing at all. However, we were merry enough, and enjoyed the comforts of a mess all the more when we saw it once again.

Thus passed a month, we doing nothing; waiting for the fall of Mooltan; and in the meantime amusing ourselves with sky races, cricket, &c. Indeed, so accustomed had we got to the life in camp, that we began to look on the Sikhs as a fabulous race, and half feared we might thus ingloriously end the campaign. Conversation became of a disagreeable sameness. Soodoolapore was fought over and over again. Once again were we in the batteries at Ramnuggur; and Shere Sing was falling considerably in the estimation of the subalterns, because he would not give them a fair opportunity for getting at him.

"This is dreadful work," said our Major. "The

odour of this camp is enough to breed a pestilence, and here we shall stick, for I hear the news from Mooltan is not over good. They have a report in the chief's camp, that we have gained some of the outworks at Mooltan, but with an awful loss. These Sikhs," continued the Major, "fight well, for just fancy, one of our shells exploding, blew up one of their magazines, killing no end of them—when the survivors cheered and fought the harder."

"I wish," said Belleisle, "they would just fight us then; but for heaven's sake let us drop the Sikh subject, it has been talked up. Now let us get Sawbones to tell one of his tales, it will do till bed time."

"Certainly," said Sawbones, or Dr. ——; the individual spoken of. "'Pon my honour, it is cool your proposition. So whenever you want something to talk about, and are hard put to for amusement, I am to find it for you."

"Come, Doctor," I replied, "don't try to impose on the public, and lead them to suppose that modesty is one of your virtues—good nature *is* your failing; so go along."

"I can't," answered Medico. "I do not remember any stirring incidents just now, or indeed anything even fit for the foundation of a tale. Moreover, it is so horribly cold in this tent, that I would rather be off and turn in."

"Nonsense, ——," said two or three. "It is not

much beyond eight o'clock, and sleep is not good for you, it makes you stupid, so come like a good fellow, do as we wish and go along."

"Why," added Ewart, "you ungrateful wretch! we have not asked for a tale for I do not know how long, but talked every fight over and over, until the very word Sikh is absolutely tiresome to hear. Come, begin."

"Very well," said the unwilling Doctor, "I suppose I must, so now listen all;" and replenishing his tumbler with brandy and water, he told the following tale.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Fifty years ago, you may have heard that men coming to this country, some as mere adventurers, others as book-keepers, were enabled, in a very few years, to amass fortunes of almost fabulous dimensions, by means which our present notions of propriety would consider anything but correct; and, having done so, returned to Fatherland with diseased livers, and domineering tempers, there to find themselves and their wealth, as a general rule, despised and rejected, with their foibles, yellow faces, and nankeen tights, brought prominently forward for the edification and amusement of the play-going public, in the character selected as the "rich old uncle from India;" the sudden death or sudden repentance of this individual, made him disgorge some of those ill-gotten gains, which alone were wanting to complete the happiness of the principal characters in the piece.

It were well for our own characters, as well as for the natives of this country, that this frightful system of peculation, bribery, and godless life has ceased to

exist, and that, although it now takes as many years as it used weeks to gather together a few rupees, still one is repaid for the loss by the inward feeling of having done one's duty, and the improved opinion the world has of the Indian. These cares or considerations had but little effect at the time I mention. Then, a man's anxiety consisted in collecting together, by any means, a sufficient sum to enable the possessor to return to his native soil, and pass the remaining portion of his days in ease and affluence.

Few ever left the shores of England with more grasping ideas and a worse heart than George Macmurdoch, and few were more successful in the race after the fickle goddess than he. Through the interest of a gentleman (who, having received some injury when on the moors, had been treated with kindness and attention by the parents of Macmurdoch) he obtained the appointment of writer, or, as it was then called, book-keeper to the East India Company; and at the early age of sixteen, left his quiet home and parents, (whose fondness for him was as unmerited as it was true), for this unhealthy land of India.

Hard was it for the fond mother to bring herself to see any advantage, that could accrue by her only and dearly loved boy going so far for wealth. "What mattered it to him possessing thousands? Could he not live as his ancestors had done, and be content

with the homely fare, and small income, derivable from the Loch Farm? The lease of this might be renewed or extended at the will of the Laird, who was ever willing to help the willing." The old father, too, he feared the boy, once away from control; he knew his son well enough, to foresee that the cruel disposition, and overbearing temper would bring with it misfortune and disgrace.

"No, George, my son," said the good old man, when the letter came from London with the offer of assistance, "do not think of it; India is far, far away, and as, during my life, you can get enough to live on; with this farm at my death there is no necessity for your leaving your mother. She would need a protector at my death, and who better fitted for such than her own son?"

"Oh, George," broke in the mother, in faltering voice, seeing, by her son's compressed lip and sullen features, how much he had set his heart on going, and how distasteful to him were her husband's words. "My own dear son, do not, I pray you, think of it. So far away, how shall we know about you? and it is, too, but a heathen land; there they bow to wood and stone. Oh, my son, go not! What advantage hast thou if you gain the whole world and lose thy soul; and when far away, who would cherish you or love you as I have done?"

"Pshaw, nonsense!" pettishly replied George. "Because the fellows there worship sticks and stones,

you must needs suppose I shall do so too. I can tell you what it is, if you don't let me take this, I will get there some way. Very likely that I should let an offer like this escape, but be contented with hedging and ditching, and remain at the mercy of the Laird. I don't care, I go; and shall not feel broken-hearted at leaving these bleak hills and Kirkudbright, for the green palms and sunny skies abroad."

"Then, George," replied the father, "I cannot help it, since you are determined on going; but when seas divide us you may think differently, and yet learn to love the land of your birth, 'the bleak hills,' as you term our mountain home. My blessing you have, and may every mercy be shewn you; but, remember, a son owes duty to a parent, and rest assured, if you forget this, God will forget you. Your mother has claims upon you, and for her sake you should remain at home."

"What good would that do her?" angrily demanded George. "As long as you live she cannot want, and if you died, I suppose she could go on with the farm, or I should be able to give her lots of money; for I can assure you, I do not intend going so far and not get money. That is my object, Sir; and that is why I am anxious you should accept Mr. Maclean's offer."

"Then, George," sobbed his mother, "if neither love for me nor your father will keep you, nothing

will. Oh, George, I dread this; you are very, very young, and at so great a distance who can tell what may happen? you may be ill, or—" but sobs prevented her finishing the sentence, and she left the room, as at the same time did her son. She to the quiet seclusion of her chamber, there to pray for mercies on her boy; whilst he, after directing his father to write and accept the offer, made the best of his way across the moor to the house of a man, named Wells, of whom few spoke a good word, but with whom a close intimacy had existed for more than a year. Next morning the letter was dispatched, and in due course of time an answer received, directing young Macmurdoch to come up to town and leave the arrangements of outfit, &c., &c., to the donor of the appointment.

A mother's grief I will not stop to describe, most of us have seen it; but with Mrs. Macmurdoch it was more than usually acute. Not only did she dearly love her son, but he was an only one, and had until that time never left the old house at home. The coach rolled swiftly away, and in four days' time George Macmurdoch found himself making future plans for payment of his outfit, with the former guest of his father's at the Loch Farm; a few days afterwards he sailed for India, and in due course of time, which in those days was from six to eight months, George Macmurdoch set foot on the sandy, dusty plain of Calcutta, young in years, but old in ideas,

and fully determined to have his share of pulling at the Pagodah tree, as was then termed saving the rupees.

Promotion in the favoured service was something wonderfully rapid in those days, and mere lads had charge sometimes of districts larger than an English county. As their ignorance of the language was only exceeded by their arrogance and impertinence, you can imagine the unfortunate natives, whose necessities brought them to these so called courts of justice, were heavy sufferers, and the result of litigation, such as might be expected, viz., that he who had the longest purse and paid best, gained the cause.

The district of Rowanpore was not more fortunate in the person selected as Magistrate and Collector, than some of its brethren, but complaint was useless. Who would believe the poor ryot against so mighty a man as the Collector and Magistrate?

Things continued to go on in the same sad way. Often did the poor ryot sigh for the day back again when he was taxed by the Mussulman; he at any rate spent his exactions among them, and planted trees, sunk wells, and allowed they were something better than beasts. Now a visit from any connected with the Cutcherry was dreadful; a summons to attend there was ruin. The heavy fine put upon the already overtaxed estate, caused it to lapse to Government, alias the Collector, and from him transferred to one

more capable of paying the fine and certain expenses, which person, perhaps, would find ere long to his cost, that his money was but badly invested, and that the tenure of his lands was as frail as the honour of him who was judge, jury, and executor.

The Collector of Rowanpore was a stout, florid looking young man, disliked by all, and feared by all—his house a perfect palace, had been built by his predecessor, who dying of jungle fever, left a district most disturbed and troublesome. The best person to bring them to order was considered to be the Deputy Collector at Allahnuggur, whose district from being bad paymasters, had under his régime become very exact and punctual; and as he had performed his duties so satisfactory in the smaller district, it was considered advantageous to the interest both of the Government and Rowanpore, that the deputy of Allahnuggur, should be chief of Rowan.

The new Collector required a few weeks in office to enable him to know the natures of those under him; these he soon found out, and such as suited his purposes were retained, or promoted; those obnoxious, dismissed and expelled the district. Heavy fines were imposed upon noisy zumeendars, their estates confiscated and sold, much to the advantage of the Collector. Thus he ruled with an iron hand, nor did rumour ever go abroad that he was worse than his fellows. The taxes were paid, the people quiet, and at the expiration of a year from the time of his

arrival, a letter of praise and thanks for the very able manner in which the duties of his district were conducted, had been sent from the Secretary of Government to George Macmurdoch, Esq., Collector of Rowanpore.

The long dreary months of winter went away, then came bright sunny spring, to this succeeded summer, and yet no letter reached the family near Kirkudbright. Often when business called the old man into the post town, would his ears be greeted as he closed the outer door with a word from his wife, "Not to forget to ca' at the post, and see if there was na letter from Geordie so far away." Again came winter and still no news; no word, no line from George. "Hope deferred makes the heart sick," and indeed sick at heart, and sorrowful was the old father, as he toiled up the steep path leading to their mountain home, the bearer of the never-varying answer, "there are none."

Many was the long, kind letter sent from the fond father, and still fonder mother; and as time flew by, anxiously would they hope for an answer to at least one of them, but it never came. Excuses would be made, "he might be ill," "the ship might not have reached," or "he might be no longer living;" but this last they knew was not the case, as from information received from Mr Maclean, (who had been paid the money advanced by him for outfit) they ascertained that he was doing well. Beyond this

they knew not, or could they obtain further information; for soon after the repayment of the money, Mr. Maclean obtained employment abroad and removed there accordingly.

Many an old London paper would be sent by kindly neighbours to the old couple, to enable them to find out anything which might relieve their anxiety. Sometimes in the shipping news they would see mentioned the name of a vessel as having arrived at Calcutta, by which they well remembered the long tear-blotted letter had been sent. Then the old man would count back the months to the date assigned, and find, for not the first time, that there had been ample time for reply. These were bitter moments. Both felt, though neither liked to say, they thought George had forgotten them, and that sixteen years of anxious care and solicitude for the welfare of their only child, was repaid with silence and contempt.

Thus rolled on years, and with the proprietor of the Loch Farm they did not do so without leaving traces of their footsteps. The hair was silvery white; and the once strong, upright figure, now looked aged and bent. Still worked he on, but not so easily as formerly; pains and aches to which as a younger man he had been a stranger, now sometimes assailed him. Disease slowly, but surely, was undermining his constitution, and the cold raw fogs of dark November pressed heavily on the aged man;

and ere winter had set in, racking fever had seized on every limb.

There was one, who from the first had noticed this change coming over the once strong man, and now appeared to shake off her own cares and infirmities in trying to alleviate the sorrows of one who, long years ago, she had taken a solemn vow to cherish both in sickness and in health. Untired and untiring, did she watch that wasted figure as it tossed uneasily on the homely bed. Oh, those long, cold, dreary months of winter, how slowly they receded, and he, in whom she saw her all, lay prostrate on that bed of sickness. Sometime in the madness of delirium, or perhaps in that almost worst state, the half idiotcy of partial improvement. No hand but her's administered the bitter draught, no words but her's whispered such sweet hopes of consolation for the present or for the future. Her voice alone it was that could call his scattered thoughts to reason, and fix themselves on brighter hopes hereafter.

The small stock of silver, the hoardings of years, and kept chiefly with the view of restocking the farm, repairs, &c., now waxed low; the continual drain for medical attendance and medicines, with the payments made to others for doing the work formerly done by the proprietor alone, made dreadful havoc in these scanty savings, and poverty began to shew itself. Spring, so full of hope, brought with it but little to the farm. Land which in former years lay

ready for her coming, now was unprepared, and yet the rent must be paid. Time was asked for, and allowed. Summer would perhaps renew his strength, and a plentiful harvest make amends for past misfortunes. But the renewed strength never came, or was the harvest more than ordinarily good, then as if to crush the last struggling hope, news was brought that the Laird's bailiff, who had hitherto stood their friend, was no more; and had been succeeded by a man, whose grasping and domineering temper made him but few friends in the part of the country from which he had come.

Mr. Mellish, for such was the new bailiff's name, had been known for some years past in the county as a small farmer of an experimental kind; but having neither the capital, industry nor talent, sufficient to carry out plans, either good or bad—it ended in his becoming bankrupt. After this, a situation of small emolument was offered him on the Macmillan property, and it was through their interest that he obtained the vacant bailiwick.

A temper naturally morose, had not been improved by seeing all his schemes for amassing wealth successively fail; and from being the proprietor of an estate, to find himself but the superintendent of another's, large though that was. However, he was not the man to give in, and since he was unable to carry out his plans on his own property, he determined to try again for success on another's.

Mellish was hard-hearted; his few ideas seemed to concentrate themselves on one point, which was, "that the rent of land generally, was far beneath its value, and that as bailiff, it was his duty to extract the utmost from the tenantry." His views on many subjects coincided with those of his employer, and ere many weeks had elapsed, Mr. Mellish had become the Laird's laird and the dread of every tenant on the estate.

A short time after Mellish had become bailiff, his attention was drawn to the rent due from the Loch Farm; and on proceeding to that quarter, the ill-kept fence and ruined outhouses told the reason why.

The sickly man and aged wife, found no place in his stern heart, "duty must be done; the property was being ruined, rent far too low, and even that not paid. He could but advise the removal of such tenants; ill health only a plea for robbing proprietors." He wrote accordingly.

But Mellish was wrong in supposing that the Laird was quite his slave; for not yet had the Laird, himself well stricken in years, learnt to forget those who had served him well when buoyant with health and hope. "No," he replied to the application for removal; "let them pay next time, I daresay Macmurdoch will soon be well and strong again."

Aye, "soon be well and strong again." Autumn brought it not, and the next new year saw the snow

drift over the brown sod; beneath which lay the once kind-hearted Macmurdoch.

Stunned by her loss, little recked she of the harsh and brutal language of the bailiff, who, taking *all* for rent, left her to manage as she best might, without shelter or a home. Conduct such as hers had been, love such as that, could hardly pass unnoticed, even though it were in so wild and little visited a spot as the glen of Loch Farm. Many was the good word said for Mrs. Macmurdoch, many the earnest effort made to obtain employment for her, and thus let her remaining days be passed in rest. Not as now, a recipient of the parish bounty.

Thus passed another year, the widow ever clean and tidy, added to her own means of subsistence a few shillings by spinning. Sometimes she would be seen wending her way with somewhat feeble step to the post office, there to make inquiry, done for her so many years by one now removed. Still would she write, prepaying the huge letter with the savings of half a year. But the answer, when the reply came to the oft repeated question, never once caused the eye to shine brighter—letters there were none.

Hope died away at length, and the inquiries at the the post office became less frequent.

Two years more were passed thus by Mrs. Macmurdoch, when she was offered the situation of housekeeper in a family of note, living but a short distance from her native town at Glentarff. Here

she obtained that rest for which she had so long yearned; and here would she, as her eyes, now dimned with age, scanned the bold cliffs at her feet and the wild waters of Wigan, think of her first and only child far away across that ever troubled ocean before her.

The Gordons of Glentarff, though good landlords, did not always reside on the property. The summer months were frequently passed abroad, or in search of gaiety, either in town or at some fashionable watering place, returning in time for the shooting season. Few estates could shew greater abundance of game, and few there were more hospitable than its owner. During the shooting season, indeed, the house was always crowded. Invitations to try his moorland, being an every day occurrence during his summer rambles; and as if, by these means, the game should not be enough shot, or the house sufficiently filled, Gordon usually added, "and if you know any one else that likes shooting, I daresay we can find sport for them also."

As usual, before the return of the family, a letter was sent to Mrs. Macmurdoch, informing her of the probable amount of visitors, and what preparation would be required for them. It was often no very easy matter for the good old dame to find accommodation for all; and, though with her, to hear was generally to obey, yet in this instance, she was fairly puzzled how to do so, room could not by any means

be found. Again and again would she drag herself up those great oak stairs, and wander through the long corridors, in the vain hope of not being forced to tell her patron her difficulty, but she saw it was useless to conceal, and wrote accordingly.

The answer was kind, telling her not to be too anxious, as many asked would not come; some would be put off, and the rest must manage somehow; but that three rooms were to be kept for Campbell of Gowan, who was among the invited, and who would be accompanied by a particular friend; "a gentleman," the letter added, "who is going to purchase an estate in the county; he having been born about Dumfrie's way."

At length after much altering this, arranging that, and working herself ill, Mrs. Macmurdoch had got the house fit to receive the host and his friends. Her own private room had been given up, as by doing so she was enabled to allow the three rooms kept for Campbell to be together. On the arrival of the host and those to be entertained, she retreated from the more private portions of the house, and the private room, to the more homely fare and less refined associations of the servants' hall.

"Well," said the game-keeper, coming into the servants' hall and throwing down before him quantities of game, "I have seen some bad ones in my life, and heard oaths enough; but I never came across such a one to curse, as the gentleman brought

by Mr. Campbell of Gowan. He swore at everything; just the same whether he hit or missed; it was awful. But the fellow could shoot; here are a brace of his, brought down right and left, and cleanly struck too," and the game-keeper pointed with evident satisfaction to the shot marks.

"Why," said another, likewise loaded with game, "even though he has been here so short a time, they tell some queer stories of him. The French sort of servant, belonging to Gowan, was saying, that the reason why Mr. Campbell was such friends with him, was to get him to lend money; of which he had cart loads, all got in a dreadful way out of the kings in the Indies, among whom he was a sort of judge, and there he lived shooting lions and tigers. So that accounts for his shooting so well now, for I suppose if he hadn't practised a good deal in those foreign parts he would have been eaten."

"Does he come from this way," asked the first speaker.

"Yes, I think he does," answered the second "anyways he knows all about the hills and the estates round. When I went with him to the bi of turf up by Dean's Farm, he asked half-a-hundre questions, about who had such a place now? an what had become of others? I was saying that 'th skeld' was now almost all in crop or pasture; whe he turned round sharp on me, saying, 'I remembe

it well enough, many a time I have gone over it with 'Wells.' Now, all know that Wells was hung at Dumfries but three years ago, for murdering a game-keeeper; so that was not very good company for him to keep, though he was only a boy at the time he talked about."

"What does he look like?" said Mrs. Macmurdoch, her voice tremulous with emotion.

"Same as other men, but dark from being in hot countries," said the game-keeper.

"Thank you," responded the old lady, and rising she left the servants' hall, her hasty manner of doing so not escaping observation, for as soon as out of sight, was she the subject of conversation.

"I shouldn't at all wonder," said the housekeeper's assistant "if it turned up that this swearing gentleman is Mrs. Macmurdoch's own son; for I have many a time heard her talk about him as having years ago gone to India, as a great man; and she has often told me to inquire at the post office for letters from India. He was always wild and unkind. I've heard her say so."

"May be," said the game-keeper, "but if it was, he would not have allowed her to be so poor, and he with so much money, though it was ill come by."

"I don't know that," said the other game-keeper. "he was always a bad one, and maybe, is now ashamed to own his poor mother; but prefers that Campbell, or any other ne'er do well should get

it out of him; and he to talk of purchasin land hereabouts; but I'll find him out. So her I go to make great friends with that fellow tha Campbell brought down with him, whom he call his valet." Thus saying, the game-keeper walke off, leaving the other servants to continue the con versation.

The game-keeper was not long in working himsel into the good graces of the half French scoundrel who officiated as valet to Mr. Campbell. And a few judicious questions soon gave him the informatior he required. From this, the kind-hearted game-keeper felt certain, that in the guest of his maste and friend of Campbell, he saw none other than George Macmurdoch, the long lost widow's son. After remaining some time longer, talking ove various subjects, so as to mislead the valet, he returned to the servants' hall; however, this was now deserted, all having gone away on their various duties. Thus he was prevented from giving publicity to his information, and second thoughts made him determine, for Mrs. Macmurdoch's sake, to defer from doing so until the morrow.

Next day a large party, in which Campbell and his friend were included, was made up for the purpose of beating a particular part of the forest for deer, and the inquisitive game-keeper was ordered to attend on the same. This he thought a capital opportunity to bring about a little plan he had

formed for the introduction of mother and son; so telling Mrs. Macmurdoch how matters had gone, and the result of his conversation with the French valet, he arranged that household duties should require her attendance in the hall at the time the breakfast party broke up, and then, if all turned out as expected, she was to claim her son before them all.

Oh! how anxiously beat her heart, and how slow went the minutes. The dull, ponderous tick of the hall clock, seemed doubly sonorous, and the hands how slowly they moved round, little, if at all. How long it seemed from the breakfast bell, until she might perhaps see, and strain to her heart, the long lost son. Frequently would the loud laugh or slight noise from the breakfast room lead her into the hall; and then, the reason be attempted to be disguised, by a sudden interest in some domestic arrangement, when it was found that the alarm was without foundation.

Time wore on, the old hall clock marked off the seconds if possible yet more distinctly; still no sound of movement. The low murmur of voices and rattle of plates continued. Suddenly a movement was heard, then the door opened and forth issued a confused mass of men. Eagerly strained she her aged eyes to see *him;* but none answered the description, and instinct told her that he was none

of these. Then again came forth a multitude, talking and joking.

"Well," said Campbell, "I'll bet you a guinea on it, Macmurdoch."

"Done," said a voice, no stranger to the widow's ear; and in another instant, bursting through the crowd, the mother clung round the neck of her long-lost boy.

"Oh, George! dear George!" sobbed she; but ere there was time for more, she was flung heavily on the floor, and with a frightful imprecation on her impertinence, he demanded, "What the old harridan wanted?"

"Oh, George!" gasped she, "not still unkind? I am your mother. Years have I looked forward to our meeting, my son, my—" but another curse, and a sneer stayed her further utterance. Then disengaging himself from the crowd, George Macmurdoch retreated to his room.

With an effort painful to look upon, Mrs. Macmurdoch raised herself from the ground, and with a slight bow, withdrew; whilst Campbell, loud in his abuse of the cowardice of his associate and friend, detailed to the company how the intimacy between them had arisen. It was caused by their first meeting in some gambling-house in town—then money was lent; and finding him useful, he had treated him as such, never supposing that he would turn out

as bad as this, or bring disgrace on the house in which he was a guest.

"Oh, never mind about that," broke in the impetuous Gordon. "The fellow, too, is well born enough; for I have heard Mrs. Macmurdoch was once in a different position to anything she now holds; but it is the rascality of the villain to disown his own mother. He hit her, too, I saw it; and she has never once forgotten him. Her long life of misery to be thus repaid. He has never written to her, but with all his money leaves her thus; aye, gentlemen, it might have been, to have died from absolute want! I feel," he continued, tremulous with rage, "that such a villain should not be allowed to escape free, nor shall he pass another hour under my roof, unless he proves that my housekeeper was mistaken. But I know he cannot, his face said she told the truth. Here, Clinton," said he, calling to a servant passing, "just go up to Mr. Macmurdoch and say I should feel obliged by his giving me some explanation. No, wait! you go," said he, changing his mind, and turning to a gentleman near him, "and tell him to come down here."

"Very well," replied the gentleman addressed, and he departed on his errand; but scarcely had a minute elapsed, when he returned to say Mr. Macmurdoch was not in his room, or could he get any answer to his repeated callings of the name. "The room," he added, "was in a topsey-turvey state;

and it is my opinion, that whilst we have been talking here, the fellow has sneaked off."

"Then after him," yelled Gordon. "I'll hunt him down; he can't have gone very far without being seen. I say, Clinton," said he, calling to his factotum, "just find out what has become of Mr. Macmurdoch? Come along, gentlemen, shall we go, too?"

None required to be asked a second time, and immediately the search began; but without success. For, by some means or another, Macmurdoch had succeeded in avoiding observation, and leaving clothes, and baggage behind him, had managed to move with the greatest celerity. Thus, after a fruitless search of some hours, all parties returned to the house, disappointed and annoyed.

After a week spent in endless efforts to discover the fugitive's place of concealment, all of which proving unsuccessful, the anger of Gordon considerably abated, and good cheer with numerous friends, gave him other and more agreeable subjects to think about.

Not so, however, was it with Mrs. Macmurdoch; the blow was heavier than she could bear—the hopes of thirty years to be thus dashed to the ground. Under all her trials (the long severe one of a husband's illness and eventual death, not excepted), but one hope had sustained her, and that was, that before she died, she might be in mercy spared to once again

see her only child. And now, when the prize was won—the long-lost, much loved son claimed—to be spurned, abused, and not acknowledged by him. Those lips, her son's lips, parted not to thank his mother for years of care, or words of love, but to curse her. The idea was dreadful! and much as she tried to think that the abrupt disclosure was too much for him, or that he really did not recognize her, still an inward feeling said, "he knew her well, but shame kept him from returning her embrace."

The cup of sorrow was full, it had been drained to the very dregs; death for her now had no terrors, in the grave was no sting; she now wished to die.

For some weeks afterwards, Mrs. Macmurdoch performed the usual household duties, much in the same manner as previous to the meeting with her son; but daily the figure became more bent, and though no complaint was made, or murmur heard, all saw that she was weaker. Feeble and yet more feeble became the voice, less frequent were the visits to the more distant parts of the house; then these ceased, and friends trod silently as they passed her bed-room door. Another week, and still more silent became the great big house; a whisper of approaching death was there. The doctor came, looked solemn, but held out no hope. For a moment flickered the unsteady light of reason, a transient ray thrown across the dark vault of approaching death, but sufficient to reillumine the fleeting senses. One blessing on her

son, one prayer for mercy, and her soul was restored to Him who gave it. Cold, cold was the season, and dreary was the procession, as they wended their way from Kirkudbright to the old kirk-yard. There, side by side, lay man and wife, the snow-drift forming their common winding-sheet.

To return to Macmurdoch. After seeing that a longer stay in the hall would only tend to make his position more uncomfortable, he determined on getting quit of the old woman as speedily as possible, and so in the effort to disengage himself from her embraces, she fell heavily on the ground. "Curse her," said he, as he rushed upstairs to his bed-room, the words "coward," and "shame," ringing in his ears, as he closed the door after him. "Curse her," muttered the villain between his closed teeth. "A thousand imprecations light upon her, to claim me here. Who would have thought she would have been here? I thought she was dead enough long ago, for she never wrote latterly. However here she is, and how to manage to prove that we are not connected is the thing." Stamping up and down the room, he for some time appeared lost in thought; the angry oath, with the addition, "No, that won't do," or "I wish I had changed my name," shewed what troubled him. Opening the door he listened, and could distinctly hear his name mentioned more than once, and that in angry tones. Reclosing the door with a curse, he dragged the portmanteau from under the

bed, and forcing it open, muttered "It must be done;" and hastily filling his pockets with some gold and notes, prepared to quit the house. This he accomplished with much greater ease than he expected, and quite unobserved; the servants being employed in the hall and front part, whilst he, taking advantage of a back staircase, was clear of the house and grounds, and indeed, on the high road to Stranraer, before the gentleman sent up by Gordon to make inquiries, had reported the fruitlessness of his mission.

Macmurdoch had scarcely proceeded along the road a couple of miles before the stage coach came in sight, and a vacant place being found, he was before night sitting over the bright fire in the 'Mason's Arms,' at Stranraer. Next morning, a smack going to Belfast gave him an opportunity of leaving the country, and eluding detection and pursuit, for he guessed correctly that Gordon would not allow such an affair to pass over without making some inquiry and search.

For some weeks, Macmurdoch felt few other sensations than those of pleasure, at having managed to get away from Glentarff so easily. But as the winter came on, he felt strange and lonely in the busy town; the only person in it with whom he ever held converse, or indeed knew, was the landlord of the inn at which he stayed, and in him he found but ill companionship. Sometimes during the long,

dark, damp nights of November, as he sat alone in his sitting-room, the wind making the shutters rattle as it came in frightful gusts across the sea, would his thoughts return to Kirkudbright, the home of his boyhood, and then passing swiftly onwards, would scenes less pleasant present themselves—Glentarff and his mother falling at his feet. "Pshaw!" he would exclaim angrily, and try by deep draughts of wine to drive the horrible image from him; but it was useless, the more the wine, the greater the wish to visit the place. The bleak hills now no longer appeared bare, and his parents, where were they? did they yet live? or was his denial too much for his mother? The thought was madness to him, now would feelings arise of love and thankfulness towards her who he knew had never forgotten him. Her words he still heard, "Years have I looked forward to our meeting, my son," and how had he requited such devotion? Struck her; yes, struck her! and George Macmurdoch repeated the words again and again. That night his mind was made up, he would return to London, arrange his affairs, and from that, once again under another name, revisit the land that gave him birth.

His preparations for the journey were soon made, and ere many weeks had passed, he was in Kirkudbright, tired and way worn: anxiety of mind having reduced his strength, so that the long cold walk from Castle Douglas, proved a more difficult task

than in years gone bye. However, a comfortable fire, good cheer, and a sound sleep, had the usual restoring effects, and at dusk he determined on making his way across the well known moor, to the Loch Farm. He might, perhaps, find his father there, or by some means hear somewhat of his mother. Some one might still be there, reason urged his waiting until the morrow, but anxiety to know the fate of his parents, and yearnings to see the long left spot, determined him to start at once; so putting on his overcoat, he took the road across the moor towards Loch Farm.

As he neared the place of his birth, how each stone, each well-remembered path, called up recollections of the past. Time had altered some things. Shrubs had become trees, the stone walls appeared higher, and more land was in cultivation; still the general character of the landscape was the same, the deep tarn, from which the startled wild-duck rose as he passed, beat on its strong shore with the same measured, melancholy sound that he had noticed it ever had. The swamp was still there, the tall reedy grass in it, making wild music as it rustled and chafed in the cutting wind of the winter's night. This past, and the light from the rising moon shewed him the home of his infancy, unaltered. The gravel path, the old pear tree nailed against the white washed wall, all was the same; a bright light shone across the path—it came from the fire light

inside. A red, warm, glowing light that told c comfort within, such as he had seen full many time before. "Were the old couple there?" though he. "Did his father still enjoy his pipe over the fir whilst his mother plied her needle?" but hark there is a sound from within of merry laughter, i grated on his ear, it was out of place with his feel ings, and chilled his heart's desire, for he knew i came not from those whom alone he wished t see.

Softly he crept up to the window, and then retired the hale young farmer and his laughing wife, wer not what he had travelled so far to see; all was no blank. Dejected and disappointed he re-entered th path that led back to Kirkudbright. Nervous an ill at ease, he startled at each sound. The pewit as i flew wildly over his head making its doleful cr reminded him of his loneliness. "Who's that?" h almost shrieked as he heard a footstep close to him.

"Me," said a boy of about a dozen years old "me, Macdurmot's son."

"Whose son?"asked Macmurdoch.

"Macdurmot," responded the boy, "away at th Loch Farm."

"Oh, yes;" said Macmurdoch half soliloquising "By the bye, what became of the old people there their names were, let me see, Mac— Macmu doch;" and the name stuck in his throat, as th remembrance of his treatment to one bearin

that name flashed across the conscience-stricken wretch.

"Oh, they," answered the boy, "were turned out by the Laird's bailiff, who was turned off himself afterwards, and is they say a bad one—"

"But," interrupted Macmurdoch, anxious to bring back the boy to the subject of interest to himself, "what became of the Macmurdochs?"

"The old man died about five years ago, just when they were turned from father's place by Mellish. Mrs. Macmurdoch lived for some time down in the town, then she went away somewhere," replied the boy.

"Do you know where she went to?" asked Macmurdoch.

"No;" replied the boy; "I did hear she went England ways; but I don't know. Good night, Sir," added the boy, as he touched the bit of red hair on his forehead and hastened homewards.

"This is odd," soliloquised Macmurdoch on being again alone; "my meeting with this boy. So my father died, and my mother went to England; or had the boy known, to Glentarff; and why was this? Just because I never sent them a sixpence. Aye," and he spoke aloud; "I would give all my wealth to see them both once again; but it cannot be. I will yet see her though, and start for Wigan to-morrow."

Thus saying he lapsed into silent thought, and burying his hands into the deep pockets of his over-

coat, hastily retraced his steps towards Kirkudbright.

But he never arrived; his mangled body, bruised and wounded, was found floating some days after, among the reeds and sedge in the mountain tarn. The torn clothes and rifled pockets shewed violence had been committed, but by whom it was impossible to say. After a short inquiry, the investigation ceased; and George Macmurdoch was buried, at the parish expense, in the same church yard as rested the bodies of both his parents.

Some years after this, a man was tried and convicted of deer stealing, and it being a felony, was sentenced to die. On the scaffold he confessed to many a crime; among others, that of murdering a man on a moor near Kirkudbright, and then disposing of the body by throwing it into some water near. That man, from his pocket book which he stole, he believed to be named Macmurdoch, the son of an old couple, whose ruin he had caused when bailiff on an estate in that county.

CHAPTER XXX.

"WELL done, Sawbones," said Ewart yawning; "but I was precious nearly asleep. That was not a bad idea burying the Collector in the kirk yard with his father and mother, though your story is rather heavy in parts; but now just to let me sleep comfortably, tell me what became of all his coin?"

"I am sure I don't know," replied the Doctor. "Fancy descending into such low particulars. He is dead, his father and mother are dead, and—"

"Altogether," interrupted, Belleisle, "it is a deadly lively story, and partakes of that melancholy cast which are the peculiar feature in your tales. Never mind, I, for one, am much obliged for it, and hope the Collector was only half killed when Mellish tossed him into the lake."

"Well, that's amiable, any how," said the Doctor; "but good night," and with him the small party broke up.

The news from Mooltan was good, and now all

was activity again in camp, orders to march being daily expected. Two long anxious days spent, and then the tents were struck, the smell left far behind, and hearts swelled with hope, as we marched to give battle to the Sikh. But short was the distance; two marches led us to his lair, and ere the night of the 13th January had closed in, many a heart had ceased to beat.

"Artillery to the front," was the order, as we came to the halting ground at Chillianwallah. Then a pause—bugles rang out. Then the heavy rolling sound of the gun carriage wheels as they crashed through the low jungle at a quick trot, "Bang, Bang," and loud roared the dread artillery.

All stood ready; but the dense jungle in front prevented our knowing where the enemy lay. The shot now playing in our ranks told us they were to the front; and for us that was enough, we counted the seconds until the order to advance should be given.

"Steady, 76th," said the Major. "Captain Ewart," he continued to the second in command, "I see a movement of the troops to our right, will you ascertain what orders have been given?"

"Yes, Sir," said Ewart, plunging his spurs into his charger, and in a minnte bringing information that orders were given for deployment.

"Deploy into line upon Her Majesty's — regiment," called out our Major; and steadily did the

brave old corps do so, whilst here and there a shot from our concealed enemy thinned our ranks.

"To the front, quick march," said the Major, echoing the General's order. A flight of bullets from the jungle in front, was the answer to the order. Then one instant's delay, and the — Division, rushed into the thicket. On, onwards through briar and thorn, with shot and musketry ploughing the ground around. Now, in an open spot shewed the enemy. "Hurrah!" shouted ten thousand voices, heard above the cannon's roar; and the division closed upon them with the bayonet. A volley, a cheer, and we met. But an instant did they stand the shock; then onwards we swept, to suddenly find ourselves attacked on all sides by artillery. Crash, came in the shot, making frightful havoc in our already diminished numbers. "Charge!" roared out the Major, and the 76th rushed at the flame in front of them. A volley, and we were once again hand to hand with the foe, bayonetting him at his guns. Still ceased not the havoc, and we found ourselves overpowered and surrounded. To proceed was madness, to retire seemed impossible; no longer cheered our men, but the fixed features, and musket tightly clenched, said they would do, or die.

"The regiment will retire," called out Ewart, who appeared now to be in command; and steadily they went about, but this seemed not to affect our position, the deadly fire on us still continuing.

"Double," was the order to the — to our right, and we took it up. Retracing our steps in confusion, we retired. Once again we passed the open space, where first commenced the action; and now came the low jungle, how much was it prized! Still rained the grape, and the cry of "Cavalry upon us," added if possible to the difficulty of our position. Thinner and thinner became our ranks. Broken, and disorganized, we rushed into the jungle, the wounded to drop or die, and those yet uninjured to hasten towards the camp. It was reached with night; and with it closed on some the horrors of that day.

Such of the wounded as were near were brought in, sought for in the pouring rain, which now fell cold and drearily. Then the wearied survivors prepared to pass the night by bivouacking on the ground, occupied by themselves previous to the action.

Tired and thirsty, I had, accompanied by Belleisle, tried to bring in as many of our poor wounded fellows as possible; but the utter darkness that set in, soon made further search impracticable, so we returned to the bivouac, and passed in the wretched freezing rain, a night of misery and uncertainty. We knew not how matters had fared on the whole, or as to who or what casualties had occurred even in our own corps. Such is war; and with thanks to the Giver of all things both good and evil, and for preserving me, I fell asleep, sleeping soundly until

sunrise. Indeed, only awaking then, by being asked by Belleisle to resume our search for the wounded, and to avoid being half drowned by deep pools of water around, the result of a night's pouring rain.

Soon after this, all the troops were assembled. The chief came down the line, being loudly cheered; and then arrangements were made for shelter against the frightful storm of wind and rain, which continued with unabated violence.

Our loss was heavy; two Ensigns and the Major killed, with Ewart wounded. Poor fellow! he had been exposed to the storm all night, wounded in two places. Although a bullet had smashed his thigh bone, he was enabled to drag himself from under his dead horse, to the edge of the jungle; here he remembered no more, only recovering his senses when brought to the Field Hospital for medical treatment.

My own charger was shot, or rather wounded, just as we first entered the wood, so dismounting, I performed the Adjutant's duties on foot. They were not difficult, for before sunset there appeared to me to be no longer in existence the 76th Regiment.

Towards evening some tents were pitched, and food obtained, (for up to this time, little, if anything, had been tasted by myself or others similarly situated). The history of the action of the day before was talked about; last honours paid to the dead, and the day closed on us. A rather solemn half dozen officers congregated in the mess-tent, who

could not but feel indignant at the idea of our dragoons bolting from some wretched Affghans, mounted on ponies; and in their headlong flight to the rear, knocking over our guns and Field Hospital. Oh, it was a sad disgrace, and felt by all; probably by none so acutely as the dragoons themselves.

For days after did the work go on of burying the dead, and many a mutilated corpse was thus decently interred. Near where the struggle of the day had taken place, lay the bodies in heaps; but the mutilated remains of ours with the untouched corpses of the surrounding foe, shewed but too plainly, that here at any rate we were not victorious. It was a dreadful sight, and many was the dire oath to be revenged upon so barbarous an opponent.

A month had passed, chiefly in wet tents, picket work, grumbling, and preparations for the attack that never came. Frequently did the enemy treat us to salutes either in honour of the accession of additional troops, or to direct our attention to the fact of their being not afraid, but defiant in their position of Russool. This, to say the truth, was strong enough, and would have taken some trouble to force, had we been mad enough to try.

"Well, this is a pretty go," said one of the professed grumblers, coming into my tent on the morning of the 14th February. "These Sikhs *have* been and taken themselves off, just as we had

made ourselves comfortable with that entrenchment round."

"Off," said I starting up, "where to?"

"I don't know," answered Grumbler, "they say Lahore; done us in the eye, and are now going to have no end of fun, whilst we shall, I suppose, stick here a little longer for that Mooltan force."

"Bearer!" yelled out myself to the snoring native outside, "Cupra lou;" and in another five minutes I was over at the commanding officer's asking for orders.

"None yet," was the reply, "but I hear the force is to move almost immediately, so tell all to be ready. In the meantime call up ——, and tell him to get the mess servants to stir; can't fight on an empty stomach, unwholesome to take the morning air in an empty state, as the gentleman observed when the ordinary at Newgate found fault with him for eating a hearty breakfast just before he danced on the tight rope."

Next day we were off, and a precious hot march it was. Poor Ewart, who insisted on accompanying us in a doolee, his leg, or rather stump, being suspended from the frame work of the roof by a sling, was in great spirits; and succeeded, on the arrival of the troops at the end of our long march, in being in a state of high fever, which before the day closed, had nearly terminated fatally. However, an absence of excitement in future, and no cheroots, restored him

to better health than ever, before the campaign was ended.

"I say, Villars, old fellow," called out Waller or Stumps to me as he waddled up to my horse's side on the regiment being dismissed to their tents, or to the place in which the tents would be pitched eventually at the end of the short march of the eighteenth. "Do you know whether we go at these lads, to-day?" pointing with his sword to the Sikh army distinctly visible about three miles away.

"Don't know," was my reply, "Old P—— told me that we are to wait for some of the Mooltan force, and then go in and win; eh, Stumps? But those short stumps of your's will be worn to nothing with all this grinding."

"I did not ask you for personal remarks," responded Stumps rather sulkily; "they do just as well as those things of your's, though you do ride, all the more chance of your getting shot."

"That's what you want, I suppose, a step, eh?" answered I laughing.

"You know very well I do not, and none would be more sorry than myself, if you were killed; but if you can't answer a question without being impertinent—"

"What, Sir?" I interrupted.

"Impertinent, and let me—"

"You couple of griffs," said the Doctor, coming up between us; "what a storm in a tea-pot, I

would now go and kill each other, just to shew how much you dislike the Sikhs to do it; but really this is great rubbish, so come over to the shade there, and let's have some tea and things.

"All right," said Stumps, going off with the Doctor, and I following as soon as the guards and pickets were made over.

The Mooltan force did really come at last, so two days after saw the British army leave their tents, and march in battle array against their oft beaten foe; and once again did the howling fiend of death, find occupation in our camp.

"I say, Villars," said Captain Morris, who had succeeded to the command of the regiment since the battle of Chillianwallah, "keep near me for orders, for I shall never be able to make myself heard, when those great guns, now galloping up to the front from our flanks, begin to blaze away. This looks something like business, doesn't it? and as for those Sikh chaps, I never saw such devils. I do believe they like being licked, or perhaps partake of a nature similar to eels, and get accustomed to a painful operation. My orders are to keep at wheeling distance."

"Very good, Sir," I replied, "I think we shall not keep in column much longer, for the fellows have got our range I see. Keep your distance No. 7, steady;" and we marched heedless of the shot now whizzing about our ears.

"Wheel into line" was the order carried from the right, and away I galloped to the point.

Immediately our guns opened, and deafening was the noise created by one hundred and fifty pieces; then came whizzing shot and shell, loud roared the murderous guns, awakening the echoes with their devils' din, and once again I was engaged in "glorious war."

"The line will advance," roared out the officer commanding, and with arms at the slope, the whole line marched to the front. "Halt," and we lay down, thus allowing much of the admirably aimed shot and shell of the enemy to pass overhead.

"Steady 76th," said Captain Morris, commanding, who seemed uncertain whether in the order to lie down, he and his horse were included. So after a little hesitation he dismounted, holding on tight at the bit of the brute he termed his charger, who evidently was not fond of "war's alarms."

"Stand still, you brute, can't you?" said the gallant Captain in answer to me, who galloping up informed him "that we were standing to arms on the right."

"Well, so will I," he replied, remounting, "for I don't like this doubling ourselves up like baboons at all, it looks as if we were afraid of the niggers; besides a fellow on horseback is all the time a regular cock shy. I wish those Sikhs fellows would shoot

this brute somehow," and the Captain kicked the brute's sides viciously with his spurs.

"Those are glorious fellows in front," said the interpreter, galloping towards where I stood. "Old Sponge Staff just now coming by our left, ordered me to ride off with an order to the artillery, and my eye, wern't they catching it; I declare the men and horses were lying in heaps round about the guns."

"What was the order you took?" I asked.

"Oh, only to ask that plucky old Colonel commanding, how long he thought it would be before the enemy's fire slackened."

"Humph," said I in return, "I'll bet a rupee that question was first put to him by the Chief, then for the cowld stale, but what did old Colonel —— say?"

"'Can't tell exactly, hope soon; but will you ride away, Sir, and tell them to send me a fresh supply of men and horses?' So off I went again to tell this to old Sponge Staff, and you see the result," and he pointed with his sword to artillery galloping forwards, cheered on by a thousand voices.

"To the front, quick march," said the commanding officer, and the division advanced still nearer the foe; who poured into it shot and musketry, both from their batteries in front, and likewise from a strong position in a village at the top of a deep ravine.

"Villars," called out the interpreter to me, from the left flank of the regiment, "what's the order?"

"To advance, and storm that village," said I, at the top of my voice.

"Hurrah, chulee ou 76th," and with a cheer the brave fellows dipped down the banks of the ravine driving all before them.

"At them again," yelled out Morris in English, as with the aid of his spurs he made his horse climb the steep side of the ravine, and gloriously he led them through the frightful fire to the slight breast-work behind which the enemy swarmed.

One moment, and it was carried, then we closed, and awful was the desperate struggle for mastery.

"Villars," cried out Morris, riding up to me, "I wish you would tell—" but an exclamation of pain from me stopped him in his order, and with a voice changed from command to almost a woman's sweetness, he eagerly inquired if "I was hit."

"Yes," said I, deadly faint; and with my right hand feeling the bones of my bridle hand, lying useless and blood-stained on my holsters. "I think they have smashed my arm."

"Poor fellow," said he, and jumping from his horse he helped me to dismount; then calling out to a medical man to look to me, he wrung my sound hand and remounted, adding as he did so, "Good bye, my dear boy, I will come to you when all this is over; but I must be with the regiment,"

and soon he was out of sight, mingling with the combatants.

My eyes followed him through smoke and fire, and high above the shouts of others, did I hear his ringing cheer to the old regiment. Then getting fainter, all became misty before me, and I sank slowly on the blood-stained ground, adding my moan of agony to the many from the poor wounded fellows around.

"Just hold up a moment," said a kind voice at my elbow, in accents decidedly Hibernian. "Let us look at the arm, arrah it's a nasty blow," and the Doctor began cutting away at the sleeve of my red jacket, and shirt, then fastening on a tournequet, he asked me, "Does it pinch?"

"No," I replied, then feeling a horrible cold sensation run through me, added, "but, Doctor, you are not going to cut it off, are you?"

"May be not," he replied, "but I just fastened it up, and am going to send you off by the next dooly to the Field Hospital."

"What injury is done?" I asked, feeling certain it was serious.

"Oh, never mind, it is bad; but may be when they see it at the hospital, they will be able to judge better than I can; now lie down and be quiet until the dooly comes," said the good-natured pill, making a pillow for me of my red jacket and handkerchief.

"But, Doctor," I faintly gasped out as he laid me on the sandy soil, "do tell me how the battle has gone, for I have seen nothing since I was hit."

"Not unlikely; but arrah will you howld your tongue," he replied, then added, "there don't fret, we have licked them all to smithereens, and the cavalry are now just hastening their departure towards Peshawur."

A film came over my eyes; then I felt as if the earth was slipping from under me, and I remember no more, until I awoke to my senses in the Field Hospital, some miles away from the spot where I had been wounded.

"Villars, old fellow," said the voice I knew to be that of the Assistant-Surgeon in the 76th, who was holding my pulse with the one hand, and administering some ammonia to my nostrils with the other. "You have got a very nasty hit, and I may as well tell you at once, that you must submit to having your arm amputated."

"What cut off?" I asked, still half insensible.

"Yes," replied Mason or Sawbones, with kindness. "There is no hope for you if you don't; for the bone is smashed to pieces; it wont hurt very much, now do let it be done at once,"

"Very good, but be quick about it," said I, feeling again the horrible cold shudder run through me, which had come when talking to the other

doctor. Ten minutes more elapsed, and my fore arm and hand were added to the heaps of amputated limbs lying near the table.

The pain was great; but the aching of the bruised limb had become so intense before the operation, that cutting did not feel quite so disagreeable as I expected. When all was over, I found myself carried away to a tent, in which were three or four other officers, whose pale features, and blood-stained linen, shewed that they had but a short time before being similarly treated.

At dusk I was removed to my own tent, which, by the orders of Morris, (himself slightly wounded), had been sent from the regimental camp, with my servants, boxes, and other things, to the Field Hospital; the kind Morris rightly judging that I should be more comfortable in my own tent and alone, than in any other way.

Next morning he came to see me, and after an altercation between him and the Doctor, as to the possibility or impossibility of any harm his visit might occasion, (which altercation was loud enough to wake me from a sound sleep), I settled the dispute by telling the servant sitting at my bedside driving away flies, "to ask the Doctor to let him come in."

"There, you obstinate Sawbones," said Morris, entering the tent, without waiting to hear the result of my message to the Doctor; then coming to my

bedside, he said kindly, but loudly; for his voice went through me, "Well, Villars, my poor boy, so they lopped a limb off you. I could not see you before, for I came late last night and Mason would not let me in. How are you?"

"Oh, pretty well," I said faintly; "but don't talk so loud, Morris—"

"There, Morris," interrupted Mason, "I told you, you were too noisy. Now do go away, you will hurt him!"

"Oh, very well," answered Morris sulkily. "Of course, you doctors always make a fuss;" then changing his voice to the same kind, womanish tone that had so charmed me when on the battle-field, he whispered: "Dear Villars, I hope I have not hurt you, but I am anxious about you, and must go, for the regiment marches in half an hour in pursuit of the enemy, and I don't know, but I thought, perhaps, that I might not see you again—that is, for a long time, I mean; and so, I came to say good bye, and to give you these rupees, which you may want, perhaps, left here all alone." And he put a great bag of silver on the small table near, rattling the physic bottles on it.

"Thank you, Morris," said I; "but I do not want much money as there is pay due to me; but I see your arm in a sling."

"Oh, never mind," he continued, "I have lots, *and* subalterns have not. Besides, you may not get

your pay for a long time. The arm is nothing, only a scratch given me by a fellow when I was on the ground, the result of a header from that charger brute, who, thank heaven, got it right well in the head, and is now carrion! More than ever he did well before, eh, Sawbones?" said he, turning to the displeased doctor, who had more than once desired him to go.

"I suppose that's a pun," growled Mason; "but do go, or I will turn you out. I shall be here with the wounded, so Villars will do. There, go away!" And he seemed half inclined to put his threat of turning him out into execution, when he saw him again turn to address me.

"Good bye, Villars," said he, squeezing my hand, "God bless you;" and to the Doctor's delight he left the tent.

For many a long, wearisome day and night did I toss on that bed, racked with pain and fever; the wound would not heal kindly, and fever supervening, rendered me ill indeed. How, as I watched the shadow of the tent-pole, as it stole noiselessly round from west to east, would I long for strength, and to be allowed but books to read. Then would rise up visions of home; the sisters welcoming me, the old mill, each tree, each hill, all as I had left them years ago. Then came horrid night, the flickering candle, slops, doctor's stuff, and troubled dreams.

After removal to Lahore, and a change from a hot tent and solitude, to a comfortable house and the society of my old friend, Mason, I began to improve; and was well enough to drive out the few miles to meet the old regiment, as they entered the cantonment of Lahore after their successful chase to Peshawur of the flying Sikhs. Here also joined poor Ewart, whose long abstinence from cheroots, brandy and water, together with excitement, had so improved his looks, as to quite counterbalance the loss of his leg; and as he soon after received a first rate appointment, he was less inclined to grumble at his ill luck than was his usual wont.

A hearty welcome I received, and glad was I once again to join the old corps, resuming my old appointment as Adjutant; though for weeks after, I am afraid, the duties of that office were conducted in a very inefficient manner—my health having been so completely broken by the amputation and subsequent fever, as to render the least exertion irksome and disagreeable. Indeed, had it not been for the repeated requests of Morris, who still continued in command, and, in truth, did almost all my work, I would have resigned, and gone on leave of absence to the Hills immediately the hot weather set in. As it was, I held on until change of air became so necessary, as to make Sawbones determine on packing me off to Simla, nolens volens. And so, after a *formal* visit from the standing medical committee,

consisting of a snuffy senior surgeon, one English assistant-surgeon, and an obstinate Scotch one, who, after asking me sundry questions, decided on signing the certificates of Mason; not before, however, the Scotchman had expended an immense deal of breath, by trying to persuade the committee and myself, that "The advice of an Aberdeen mon was always considered superior to any other, and that he considered a mon more likely to pick up strength in a healthy cantonment like Lahore, than in a jungle-covered hill sanatarium, where young fellows did nothing but flirt and fool away their money."

Notwithstanding his argument, I went away, and in a few days was enjoying the cool mountain breeze, as I rode at a sober walk on the quietest of ponies round Jacko.

Before November, I was certainly much improved, but scarcely sufficiently so to allow of my resuming my appointment in the regiment. However, "poverty," says the old adage, "makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows," it might have added, and of little that affords pleasure. So not being better off than is the common lot of Indian subalterns, which I regret to say, generally speaking, are, as a rule, "hard up," and patronizers of banks, I was forced to serve the hard task master, and once again return to regimental duty. The hot weather commencing, brought with it to me the usual attacks of fever and weakness; but still I scrambled on. Morris doing

the Adjutant's work. However, weeks prov there was no relief from my pains, so I determin on taking the advice of Mason, and try the effect o complete change of scene and climate—nothing l than to revisit my native land.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PARTING with the Adjutancy to Waller, and selling off my tents, horses, sticks, alias furniture, (two chairs and a table); I set about making arrangements with the banks, endeavouring at the same time to keep in reserve a small sum of money sufficient to pay the expense of my trip from Lahore to Calcutta, and to allow of my making a few purchases there, as presents for those with whom ere long I hoped to be.

But what between Nubbhee Bux and other dealers, all having little claims, I found my calculations of a surplus, not such as would speak much for my knowledge of accounts; and at the last moment was nearly obliged to say, "farewell those visions scenes of home."

Under these circumstances, I resolved to appeal to my old friend Morris; whose offers of assistance I had often refused in days when either not so hard up, or not so tightly squeezed by poverty. However,

now putting my pride in the pocket, had only to choose between doing so, or relinquishing my leave to England.

"Morris," said I, going over at sunset to his quarters, "I have a favour to ask you, which, if it is any pleasure for you to know, I would ask from nobody else."

"Well, what is it, my boy?" asked he.

"Oh, I am very hard put to to get away, and—"

"There," said he interrupting, "I know all about it, and don't let that fret you; for I have a few rupees that I always keep somewhere, and you can have as much as you want, there will be enough left for me—"

"But," said I interrupting, "I am robbing you or depriving you of getting home, which you have told me you mean to do."

"Stuff and nonsense," continued he, half angrily. "If I did not intend your taking them, I should not make the offer. Let me see, you go on Wednesday, to-night is Monday. Well, I can give you a draft for as much as you like on the Calcutta branch of the Agra Bank, and leave me to settle with these fellows here to whom you owe money."

"But, Morris," I said, overcome with his generosity, "I will not, cannot take all this as a gift. I owe much more than you think; and will promise to repay you, if I live; but I may not, for I feel I am *very ill*, and—"

"And," said he, taking up my last word, "I shall be diddled out of my money, dear me though, that's bad. Now, Villars," continued he, "do not make such a fuss about a few rupees, for I really have a good lot of them, and tell me fairly what you owe, and how much will be necessary to let you leave the country clear?"

"I have counted up every sixpence that I owe," said I in return; "and am sure two thousand rupees will clear me, and pay my expenses from this to Calcutta."

"Is that all?" said the Captain with a laugh; "why you made such a fuss, I thought it was much more than two thousand; pshaw! a dirty 'two hundred pund.' Here I will write you out a draft for it. Now drop the subject and take a cheroot."

"No, thank you, you dear good fellow," I said, "as I am forbidden even that sort of fun now by Sawbones; who has been, for the past week, storing my mind with images of all his friends who have come to an unhappy end through tobacco. But I must give you some acknowledgment for this money;" and I took hold of the pen which he had replaced in the ink after writing out the draft.

"Of course, just the thing I want. Do please, and begin, 'I promise to pay about the Greek Kalends, or when asked for.' Nonsense," said he, changing his voice from a bantering tone to angry, "I don't want anything of the sort, you may pay me

when I ask for it, or when you can afford to do so; but don't go by Sawbones about smoke, he can't smoke, never having tried but once, and that was at school when the big boys made him; then they thrashed him for being sick afterwards, and to crown all, he was again licked by the master for smelling of smoke; so his dislike to smoking is easily accounted for. Don't go," added he, seeing me shew an inclination to be off, "I want to give you a message to my mother, who you must go and see; she lives in Gloucestershire."

"Of course, I will," I replied, "and shall be always more than pleased if it is in my power in any way to repay the kindness you have shewn me."

"A very neat speech," said he, half bantering, "and when perfect in these sort of nice sounding sentences, you will be much sought after, especially by the dear creatures in petticoats; but to return to my dear old mother, tell her all about me; don't say I look over old, but make me out all right, tell her—" and his merry voice faltered, "tell her, I won't stop out here much longer. That I only do so now, so as to enable us to live together more comfortably hereafter, and that I never forget her. Aye, Villars, she has been such a mother to me as few fellows have, I never remember her angry, or has she ever, old as she is, let pass an opportunity of writing or sending something to me. Good night,"

added he abruptly, "I cant stand all this; and saying good bye too. God bless you, Villars; mind, remember my mother." Then shaking my hand, he retired into the house, not however, without having forced upon me the draft of two thousand rupees.

I had intended going on to some of the other officers to say farewell; but the interview with Morris had somewhat upset me, so I returned home to a solitary cup of tea, and was occupied till past midnight in arrangements for my journey on the Wednesday.

Next day I bid all good bye, and settling with everybody, through the money received from Morris, I left early by dak on Wednesday for Jullundur and Umballah. Here I arrived in due course of time, and within a month found myself gazing on the shipping in the river Hooghly, from the windows of Spence's Hotel in Calcutta.

Little had occurred in the way of alterations or improvements in this city, since the time I had first seen it. Still the old smells, wretched oil lamps, green turf, red roads, and very, very thin cattle feeding about. Then around me were still the same oily, odorous, muslin-covered baboos, fat, filthy, mealy-mouthed and mean, rolling in wealth, but without the heart to spend it, or to be generous. Passing under my windows is a thing upon wheels, somewhat between a fly and a post chaise, panels broken, the C springs rusty and worm eaten.

Wheels with broken tire and minus many spokes. To drag it, are tied in with grass rope, without pole, two wretched, sore-backed, grass-fed, broken-knee'd ponies, driven by a naked cooly. Who could own such a vehicle? None, I answer, but a Bengal baboo. Behold him inside with three others; each if possible richer and meaner than his neighbour. These are the "Dutts" or "Seals" whose millions are laid out to great advantage, not in the funds, not in charities or even railroads. Pshaw! five per cent, that would be too absurd. No, more likely to unfortunate cultivators in the districts from which, perhaps, a few hundreds per cent may be obtained; or in the bazaars to hard-working petty dealers, whose earnings are swallowed up to satisfy the lust for wealth of these cormorants.

Nothing could I see, on at all a large scale in the way of a public work. No manufactories, no bridges, but what were either the work and property of Government or that of Englishmen. Here and there a wretched, mortar-covered, ill-built temple, shewed that some Moti Lall had thought to smooth the way to Heaven, by devoting a small portion of his ill-gotten wealth to a temple for his Gods, and to make assurance doubly sure, directs his bloated carcase to be burned on Holy Gunga's shore, and his ashes cast into the muddy river.

"How different," thought I, "from the customs in the country I am going to. There wealth is not

always used solely to the advantage of its possessor, and charity vaunteth not itself."

There was much to do in Calcutta, what with certificates, medical examination, and outfit; however, at last all was ready, and with a heart bounding with delight, did I jump into the kind of box upon wheels, pulled by a stout pony, and direct the driver to take Cæsar and his fortunes, *i. e.*, myself and two overland trunks to Garden Reach, at which part of the river the huge steamer lay.

Seven years previously I had landed here, buoyant with health and hope, and now what was I? a mutilated, dyspeptic old young man, broken down in health. And hopes, where were they? not in the land I had come to, but in that dear one, far, far away beyond those palm trees; beyond that ever blue sky. That land, the home of my childhood, where waited for me kind and anxious friends—father, mother, sisters, all one holds most dear.

Oh, I longed to reach those shores. To hear once more the sound of village bells, as they rang the Sunday peal; to see the shady lane made dusty by the tramp of those, who obedient to the call, attend at the ivy-mantled church; to see a Christian Sabbath, and to leave these hot, arid plains for ever. When on board, it appeared a dream all that was going on around. Once again to feel the vibrations of the machinery as it hissed and groaned in getting

up steam; then the bell sounded, and a hoarse, rough voice called loudly to those belonging to the shore and not going with the ship to depart.

What a moment of misery to many! how many hearts are wrung! now, indeed, must they say good bye. Here on the starboard are a group of four, the centre of which is a poor, pale, girlish-looking thing parting with her two still paler-looking children, and as she wipes away the trickling tears, tries to command her voice, in the final direction given to the strong-minded red-faced woman, under whose charge the children are to go. Accompany me down that winding staircase, ornamented with muskets and pistols; see that wasted and fever-stricken wife, convulsively grasping that officer's hand, they are man and wife—the hour of parting has been put off perhaps too long, they will meet no more on this side the grave. The Red Sea will claim a victim there, and two mails hence, that man shall hear he is a widower. Why does he not go too? Because he is poor, and the interpretership would have to be vacated. No, he must return to his regiment, and save and remit each anna to that dear object gone to England; again the hoarse voice and they have parted. The bridge connecting us with the shore is removed. One great mass of smoke issues from the chimney—then with a jar we swing round into the middle of the

stream, and by night are at anchor below the 'Sand Heads,' waiting for the last despatch from Government.

The voyage home, and the incidents attendant thereon, was and are much the same to every one. The life somewhat monotonous; fare very bad, accommodation such as is most unsuited to travellers in tropical climates, where light and ventilation are of vital importance; and prices such as might bring a blush to the cheek of any, but a Houndsditch jew or a monopolist. The stopping for mails and coals at Madras, Ceylon, &c., &c., served to give some change in the conversation, to the never ceasing growl, and expressions of astonishment at the much bad we found. Then came Suez, the Desert once again, looking much as ever, dusty, bare, and cursed. Alexandria with its dirt, flies, and above all its attempts to look civilized. Malta, Gibraltar, Lisbon; and in six weeks from Garden Reach we found ourselves at our journey's end. The good steamer 'Creeper' having, in due course of time, been brought to a stand still in Southampton Docks.

How green! how bright! how beautiful, appeared all around as we steamed up Southampton water. Here the lordly mansion shut in with oaks and evergreens; there a village, the old church spire, appearing far above the tall green elms. Then from some secluded nook would mount up the pale blue

smoke of the cottage chimney. Now those busy, happy looking men on shore, and though seen in days gone bye a thousand times, how strange appeared the sight of women, English women, at manual labour; how red their faces, but withal, how cheerful, so different from all one had seen for many a year. The stolid native driving his miserable bullocks, yoked to a primitive cart; a wretched wife perhaps walking by his side, dirty and savage looking. Here and there a gaudy stucco built temple, the few trees planted around, making the sandy wastes look, if possible, more uninhabitable and desolate. Now these scenes were far away, and I felt grateful, that after so much ill health and scenes of war, I had been permitted once again to see my own, my dear, my native land.

It was nearly dark before all my boxes were cleared and passed the Custom House; then papers had to be sent off to the India House. So between all, I was so tired, as to determine upon passing the night at Radley's, instead of proceeding on to St. Helens by the night train, as had been my original intention. English fare, and an English bed ought to have made me sleep well, notwithstanding the unusual exertion of mounting up several hundred steps, the which formed the hilly path to my dormitory; but a very small room, situated in some remote corner of the house, very near the *slates*, and the proximity of the meeting house of

the neighbouring cats, robbed me of the much desired sleep.

The early train saw me on my way; oh how I grudged each stoppage, and counted the minutes by the station clocks until the time to start again. What hopes would present themselves, and how vividly, in my excited imagination, would old scenes return, the old ivy-covered house, the dark green yew; then leaving these, I almost thought I was there already, my father happy, and I answering the thousand questions of those I loved so well. To tell of how I lost my arm, and see dear sisters' faces, as tears of joy made their bright eyes brighter.

"Gloucester, Sir," said the guard, opening the door, and interrupting me in my reverie, "the train stops here, Sir."

"When does the next start for Chepstow?" I asked.

"Thirty past three, Sir," said the man, at the same time telling a porter to take my luggage.

As there were nearly two hours to that time, I could do nothing better than order dinner, and during its preparation, strolled about the old city. Then returning, once again the shrill whistle sounded, and I was on my way to the Beaufort Arms at Chepstow, where I had determined on leaving my boxes, and proceeding on foot to St. Helens, the better to accomplish a little plan of surprise, the arrangement of which in my mind had served to

make the monotonous road from Gloucester to Chepstow appear less uninteresting.

Chepstow was reached, just as the shades of evening began to cast a gloom on many a well remembered view. Here before me were still the same scenes I had known of old; all appeared unchanged, the very head-waiter was the same. Still stared one in the face the dingy gilt letters of "Old Bank;" then leaving these and walking up the steep street, frowned the old gateway, looking almost picturesque in the twilight of summer; then by the turnpike rose up stiff, red, and dismal, that brick abode once belonging to the tyrant Lewis, not now adorned with the big brass plate on its dreadful door, but still there was a Scholastic Establishment appearance about it, that made me involuntarily hasten on. Now houses became scarcer, and beautifully grand appeared the Wind Cliff, as I pressed quickly past it, almost running, as I discerned by the pale light of the young moon, the lodge of the St. Helens property.

Avoiding any questions from the lodge-keeper by quietly climbing over the white painted gate under her charge, I stole quietly up the gravel path. Unperceived I reached the ivy-covered porch and listened entranced to the cool night wind as it moaned through the dark green yew trees, and shook the fruit laden pear tree on the old house wall. And *this* was my father's house, this the house which I

had left years ago, and now could see, could even touch. It appeared impossible; and yet there it was, old and ivy covered. Then what were they doing inside? expecting me, waiting, perhaps, to hear the sound of wheels. "Shall I knock?" thought I, "or go in by the old side door?"

I had just determined on the side door, when from the shrubbery came yelping at me some ugly cur. Another instant, and a kick well directed, had sent him howling back again; but not before my exclamation of "Take that you brute, you're Henry's I'll bet a penny!" had reached the ear of my sister Ella; who springing from the shrubbery, in which she had been walking, was clinging round my neck.

"Oh, Philip! dear, dear Philip!" said she sobbing, "I am so, so glad to see you, I have been expecting you all day, and would not leave this shrubbery until the last moment, for I wanted to be the first to see you; but you must be tired," then continuing, her eyes glistening with the tears in them, as she gave me an opportunity of breathing by releasing her arms, "come into papa, they are all there waiting for you. But, Philip, your poor arm is gone, poor fellow, my dear, dearest brother! I did not hurt it I hope," and the tears trickled down her beautiful cheeks as she stopped questioning me.

"My own dear Ella," said I, now able to get a

word of my own in; "you cannot tell how glad I am to see you, too, dear Ella. Do you know I have been standing musing under these old walls for the past half hour, and should be so still, I dare say, if that cur had not interfered. But let us come inside and see the dear old father, Jane, mother, and every one and everything."

"But," she began, "do tell me whether I hurt—"

"Stuff and nonsense, you dear little darling," said I, stopping further questions with a kiss. "Come, take my arm and introduce me; and then afterwards I will tell all of you how I lost the arm, whether it hurts, and, indeed, satisfy any amount of curiosity. It is peculiar to your sex, you know."

"Oh, that is it, is it?" answered she laughing. "Well that is a civil speech to begin with. But come along;" and opening the door we entered the house.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I WILL pass over the meeting. It was such as is, I imagine, of daily occurrence in England, where so many travel, and from which so many emigrate. Warm hearts gave me a warm welcome. My coming in had evidently disturbed the trio from a sort of half napping, half thinking humour. The rush to receive me over, Ella and myself joined the party. After a few questions regarding my general health, all their curiosity appeared to be devoted to the arm. "Does it hurt you now?" asked one. "Was it very painful cutting off?" asked my mother with a shudder. "Did you roar out?" said the father, his eyes twinkling with delight at seeing me again.

My first half hour was devoted to answering such questions as these; but all this time I was not idle with my eyes, they scanned the old room well. Little indeed did I see altered; the same old solid looking clock cased in black marble, its tick as solemn as ever. The same roomy, really easy chair, its leather covering not renewed, but not improved

by seven years additional wear. My arm was resting on the fine old oval dining table, its surface polished as ever; shewing that still the Major was proud of his mahogany. Over the old oak mantel piece hung the Major's picture, revelling in red paint and stormy sky for background. The pleasing smile and rosy cheeks had, however, long since left the original.

Time had but slightly touched any of the family. My father had, perhaps, become greyer, and from his slight limp, I could see that gout had visited him. His wife and daughters looked very well; the former stouter, and the latter, from mere children, had become as handsome and good a pair of girls as were to be found between Chepstow and Carlisle. Henry was not at home. He had gone from bad to worse, had sold out of the army, making, as he termed it, St. Helens "his head-quarters." That is he honoured it with his presence when his finances were low, and considered a personal interview with its proprietor was necessary towards replenishing them.

"Fancy, papa," said Ella, breaking a silence that had been caused by my description of the way I was wounded. "I found your son doing sentinel at the outer door; Teazer discovered him."

"That brute!" muttered my father. "But what made you stand there?"

"I hardly know," I answered, "I wanted to *surprise* you all; so I climbed over the lodge gate,

and sneaked up the gravel path through the evergreens; when just as I had made up my mind to enter the house by a side door, out comes as ugly a cur as you could wish to see, I kicked him back into the bushes; where he howled so lustily as even to arouse Ella, who was there doing sentimental and wooing the moon."

"You ungrateful fellow!" said Ella, "I was not even thinking of the moon, but of you, and I told you so. You will repent such ingratitude, I can tell you," and she bent her little hand up, putting it into that peculiarly awkward position, which her sex imagines looks like 'men do when they fight.'

"I wish, papa," said Jane, "you would have Teazer tied up when Henry is away, he is not—"

"I wish he was dead," snappishly interrupted the Major, "I am sure he is not good for anything except to snap and snarl, and is as disagreeable as his—"

"Master," said Ella, finishing the sentence.

"No, I did not say that," replied my father. "But what nice people we are, all chatting about that nasty cur, and never asked our hero to eat anything. All Ella's fault, for we dined I do not know when, somewhere about breakfast time; as Ella insisted on having everything ready for your arrival, and there the table in the dining-room has been laid out ever since, so let us go there."

My walk had made me hungry; and notwithstanding being nearly roasted by a great fire, which my mother and sisters had together kept up, (they innocently imagining that coming from India, I could never feel England hot enough) I did ample justice to the fare; and it was late before we parted for the night, the road to my bed-room being shewn by Ella, who seemed to consider me as under her especial protection.

"Good night, my dear brother, I am so glad you have come; your doing so will be such a comfort to papa and mamma," said Ella, as I took the candle from her. "Henry has behaved shamefully; but mamma always thinks he will improve, and makes excuses for him."

"What has he been doing?" I asked, "you know the mother always did so."

"Far more than I can tell you to-night," she replied, "and as you must be dead tired, I shall leave you, so good night," and the fairy figure tripped lightly up the old oak staircase; leaving me alone once more in my old bed-room.

Tired and sleepy though I was, yet the neatness and order of all around passed not unobserved. On my dressing table stood a small jar of flowers, gathered I knew by Ella. The pictures, too, on the wall, most of them the performance of myself years ago. Indeed, everything was there to please, *and I* felt grateful that I had been spared to be

once again among those that loved me for myself alone.

Rising at daybreak, I was soon out looking at all my old haunts; nor did I return to the house, until long after the bell had rung the servants and family to prayers and breakfast. This, however, did not injure my appetite, rendered keener by the slight frost of an autumn morning, nor was it affected by a hint from the major-domo, that he liked all to be present at family prayers.

"Philip, my boy," said my father, his eyes twinkling with delight, "I like to see you enjoy your breakfast. A few weeks of Monmouthshire air will get all the Indian harm out of you; put some roses in your cheeks, and some flesh on your bones; as at present you are something of a scarecrow," and the old gentleman chuckled at his own joke, pushing towards me half-a-dozen things to eat, insisting on my trying all.

"Thank you, governor," I said, "you are pleased to be complimentary. Wait until I get up my English appetite and you will be a loser. But," said I, turning towards my mother who sat silent, "do you allow the head of the family to waste his compliments this way?"

"I never interfere. I do not think your father was ever very complimentary, but you must not be offended at his jokes," said my mother.

"Offended, mother," I answered, "Heavens, no!"

However, my mother's answer threw a sort of blank over the rest of the meal; and I was not sorry when it was concluded, to promise to accompany Ella to the copse at the river side.

Arm and arm we wandered across the green sward, and under the hedge with its varied coloured leaves, its branches supporting thousands of blackberries, black with ripeness. Then, on into the old beech wood; the ground covered knee deep with years of fallen leaves, black and red, cracking and scenting the air with a sweet earthy smell, as we crushed them under foot. How pleasant is all this to the eye of one who for years had seen little else than leaves ever green, and earth ever dry and sandy.

Now came a giant oak, its roots bare and exposed, washed smooth by the effects of centuries of the rushing Wye. Beneath this we sat, and with feelings of no common kind, did I listen to Ella, as she told me of all that had occurred since last we met.

It was the old story; Henry always head over ears in debt, with his commission just saved by timely assistance from his father. What weighed most heavily upon all the family, was the fact of his at last being forced to sell out. This was a great blow to his parents, more particularly to his father, who, as an old soldier, knew well what "forced to sell" really meant. Then, to add to it, Henry *treated* the whole matter as rather a good joke,

smoked and polished up pipes, and made a perfect convenience of his father's house.

"But Jane, what about her?" I asked.

"She," replied Ella, "is very good in many things, and as kind-hearted a girl as ever lived, but does not see all Henry's faults; though, like myself, cannot approve of the way Henry speaks. Indeed, she often speaks to mamma about it, but mamma will not give it to Henry. Jane thinks papa too severe upon Henry, for you know she and he were always great friends."

"Well, and so we were, Ella, dear," I answered; "but I think Jane's manner to me seemed queer and cold; for since I came yesterday evening she has scarcely spoken a word, but sits watching me, not suspiciously, but rather kindly than otherwise. I cannot make it out; she and mother both appear cold towards me."

"No, no, Philip, my dearest brother, you must not say that of either of them," rejoined Ella. "Mamma was always somewhat reserved in her manner, and has never had good health; besides, is always nervous when Henry or his dog get mentioned, for papa gets violent on the subject, and she cannot avoid making excuses for the man. As for Jane, she would, I feel sure, give the world to throw off that manner, and be a kind, loving sister; but Henry has prejudiced her against you to a little

extent, perhaps. That she loves you and is glad to see you, I may with safety declare."

"Well, then, I wish she would shew it a little more," I answered, "for concealed love was never a favourite of mine; but as for Mr. Henry, he and I never got on, and shan't now, I suppose; however, I will not be the first to quarrel. I have come home to enjoy all these beautiful scenes, the nice cool air, green fields, and last, though not least, both my dear sisters' society; so bother Henry, and let's away back to the house, and when you have nothing better to do, tell Jane that I am not half so black as my brother has painted me."

"I don't think Jane considers you black, but agrees with me, that you are more yellow from a disordered liver than burnt by the sun," replied Ella, with a pretended look of naiveté.

"Hang your impudence!" I answered; "but come along, I hear the old governor calling out my name;" and going homewards, we were met by the Major, having an open letter in his hand.

"Philip," he said, on my coming up, "I have been trying to find you, to say that your mother and myself were engaged to-night to dine with old Davis at Sandy Well, and that I have been thinking of writing to him to say that you have returned, and would accompany us if he has no objection."

"Oh, no," I answered, "I would rather not go.

There will be no one there, I fancy, but liverless, yellow-faced fellows like myself. Eh, Ella?" and I gave her a pinch that caused a scream. "I like old Davis, but am sick of India; and there will be nothing but India talked all night. I do not generally like old Indians, they are very much prejudiced, and their ideas, from want of fresh associations, become limited; whilst, from never being contradicted, their manners are unpolished and dogmatical."

"Never mind, go and judge for yourself," said the Major. "I like what they call Indians; at any rate, those I have seen. They may be rough, and not so polished as the polite, but cold-hearted men at home, but they are sincere, and gentlemen. Compare them with the society round about here, and you will see how superior they are. Now, if you will come to-night, I will shew you a few resident gentry. Among others, it will delight me to introduce you to the member, or, as he is called, 'Newport's boast;' such a nice, gentlemanly fellow! and don't the collier lot there brag of him? What for though, I don't know, except it be extreme vulgarity. He will give you an excellent idea of what the free and independent member is, and eats his letter H as well as the best of them. There will be two or three of the same sort there, all of whom, after inveighing for years against the landed interest, have converted their stock of hides, tallow, and other

abominations into cash, adding to this their profits made by false weights and adulterations; then with these ill-gotten gains have estates been purchased. And now, none so violent as they against the working man and poacher. Pshaw! I hate them; they do no good whatever, what with their peace doctrines and humbug. I'll tell you what it is," spoke the old gentleman, getting louder and more angry with his subject, "with them the whole world is weighed against a bale of cotton, not a bit do they care if all goes to bad, so long as cotton is cheap, and calico in demand."

"Very well," I replied, "write away, and say I shall be delighted to meet your vulgar friends. I never came across any in India, as they never come to that country to judge for themselves; but are satisfied with pitching into the rulers of it for neglecting to make roads to the cotton growing districts, and for not improving the quality of the cotton grown. But these men are not the type of Englishmen, any more than the yellow old cudmudgeon is the type of an Indian officer. I do dislike the old Indian, some may be perhaps a little liberal with their money, but that very seldom, and never in opinion. The mode of life in India precludes it; as for instance, the military man is from his first commission hedged round with articles of war, everlasting forms, rules and regulations; and has so *many* commanding officers, from his own regiment to

the Commander-in-Chief upwards, that if he ventures to move the slightest from the old routine, he is sure to rub up the hair rough of one of these gentlemen; and then he gets so snubbed and wigged, that as he gets older, he himself fits the old mould, and becomes as dogmatical and obstinate as any. The civilian is no better, but perhaps a touch prouder. Twenty-four years of his life has been passed in a kutcherry or justice-hall where he alone is paramount. The Government have always bespattered him with praise, and at all times he is surrounded by natives, salaaming and flattering him, giving him to understand about sixty times in a minute, that 'the Huzoor,' or himself, is perfectly incapable of error in thought, word, or deed, and that the very ground is honoured by his walking upon it. The whole lot of old Indians, civil and military, hate innovation of all sort, venerate the antique and precedent, have somewhat loose ideas on religion, and a holy horror of responsibility."

"Humph," grunted the old gentleman, evidently not much pleased. "Then I will say you go with us," and off he went to seal up the note.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"WELL, Villars," said old Davis, looking little if any changed from the time I had last seen him, and shaking hands with my father as he entered the room, "I am very glad you have brought Philip, and congratulate you on getting him back again." Then turning to me, and shaking me warmly by the hand, he added, "And to you I need only tell you what I have said often before, that I shall always be glad to see you fishing or shooting, dinner or supper. Ah, I see they have robbed you of a limb. Well, well, those that go to wars must expect knocks, and your health, that does not seem over good; but you must stop at home now, and take care of my old friend, your father."

Then placing his arm in mine, he introduced me to the company, most, if not all of whom had assembled.

"Mr. Villars—Mr. Jones, our member," said the host, introducing me to a red-faced, square-built *little man*, with a very short-waisted coat, and an

immense quantity of white waistcoat. "Mr. Villars has just returned from India, and may perhaps be able to give you a hint on Oriental politics. Though as far as I remember, the people there don't trouble themselves much on that head."

"Sorry to hear it," growled out Jones, then bowing stiffly, he added, "I am glad, Mr. Villars, to make your acquaintance, and if you have no objection, we will chat a little whilst waiting for dinner."

"Certainly," said I, drawing my chair near; but fearing from the introduction that India would be the topic, I determined if possible to avoid it, and observed, "That waiting for dinner was always dreadful work. The ice of first meeting requires a good dinner to dissolve it."

"Humph, I don't think it is always so," replied the member in that tone and manner peculiar to his class. Then turning abruptly towards me, he asked, "Did you lose your arm in any of those Indian battles?"

"Yes," I replied laconically, feeling inclined to add, "and what business is that of yours?"

"Rare bungling affairs those were," he went on. "No generalship, all mismanagement with massacre. I think, Sir, they ought never to have taken place; but it is this grasping for territory that is our ruin. Lord Dalhousie wanted the Punjaub, and as it must be had, he was not long in finding an excuse to do as his predecessors had done, and annex it."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Jones," I said, "at this distance you cannot tell what are the secret causes. We never annex until the people rebel against us, or the oppression of the rulers is so great that we take the country so as to protect the people."

"People rebel, eh?" said he, with half a sneer, "and so we are philanthropists in India; well, I never knew that before, only take lands to protect the people. Somehow we only think those people worth protecting, whose country is rich enough to pay."

"Grandmother," I replied, in no very good humour, "we are really no tyrants, and try, as much as the natives will allow us, to ameliorate their condition; but it is difficult often to make these people understand us. They hardly understand our real honesty of purpose, and I truly believe instead of admiring a man for not taking a bribe, think him a fool. But as to Lord Dalhousie having wanted to annex the Punjaub, I do not think he did. The Punjaub war was begun before his Lordship came to India, and I fancy he thought the best way to stop all the misery, murder and confusion, was to give it the benefit of English law and order."

"Annex, of course he did," said my friend, "as he did Pegu, and will every other state if he can only get an opportunity. Perhaps you have not seen Cobden's pamphlet on the Burmah War. I *think* that gives it pretty strongly to his Lordship;

and has opened the eyes of the natives a little to the motives of their rulers."

"I dare say," I said half angrily, "Lord Dalhousie is quite capable of defending himself and acts against Mr. Cobden, crew, and even yourself; but 'tantas componere lites,' he doesn't, I should imagine, think it worth while. You know you can't play with a sweep without getting somewhat blackened. Any way so long as we govern India, it is improper for England to let the ruled know that their rulers are infamous. One thing, the pamphlet will do but little harm, for the natives never read such things, caring for nothing beyond poojah, or idol worship, pice or pence, and ghee, which means rancid butter."

"Ah, rancid butter, that is caused by the grinding process, which prevents them having anything better; and, of course, they are not taught to take an interest in things going on in England. It might teach them ideas of liberty, enlighten them too much." And the vulgar brute grinned as if he thought he rather had me now.

"Well," I replied, "why don't some of you philanthropists go out and teach them another grinding process, which is to make them like anything better than ghee, or to take an interest in anything new or uncommon? No, catch you; instead of judging for yourselves by going to India, you sit at home at ease, eating and drinking, and put unfair construc-

tions on every order and motive of the ruling powers there. It would be a treat to see some of you in a hot Bengal sun, drumming English ideas into a lot of nearly naked black fellows, steamy and odoriferous."

"We have other duties to perform at home; but we know well what goes on in India. Month after month we hear of oppression and cruelty. The grasping energy of your Governors, and the arrogance and corruption of their subordinates. Naked—we know the natives are; only because the 'system' won't allow them to purchase sufficient cloth for the purposes of decency," said Mr. Jones, reducing his voice to a whisper, as if the idea was too dreadful for general comment.

"You have hit it off exactly," I sneered, "yes, that is the reason. But do you think the system or sun is to blame for the paucity of clothing? I wish you would find a native that preferred tail coat and trowsers to a 'lungotee,' or in other words a fig leaf."

"Dinner is on the table," said a clerical-looking gentleman, throwing open the door. And in five minutes more we were seated at table.

The soup was over, and our member, in a manner most benign, said leaning across the table.

"Captain Villars, a glass of wine; although we don't quite agree about India, yet we won't quarrel. Do you make any stay in England."

"As long as my leave lasts, that is three years;" *I replied.*

"A long time, very long, too long."

"Is it? I don't think so." I said, feeling inclined to throw my wine glass at him.

"Perhaps not, Captain Villars," he answered smiling sarcastically. "But may I ask who does your duty, and pays your salary when you are away?"

"Those do my duty whose health is good enough for them to remain; and those pay my salary, as you term it, in whose service I got ill. Your notions are not theirs, Sir, thank God!" said I, feeling now inclined to exchange the wine glass for the bottle, and throw that at his head, as the boldness of his voice and the personality of his questions had caused all other conversation to be hushed, and myself to be drawn into general observation.

"Does that answer suit you, Mr. Jones?" said my father across the table. "You surely would not grind a man to death; all work and no play, you know the old adage?"

"Yes, Sir, I do know it," said Jones rather testily. "In the Company's service I think there is too much play, and very little work."

"Oh, you do," laconically replied my father, concluding his sentence in a half audible whisper, "and who the devil cares what you think?"

The conversation becoming general, I was left at peace until the ladies retired to the drawing-room; when Jones anxious to obtain some information on

Indian topics, asked me my opinion as to its capabilities as a cotton growing country.

"Really, I can hardly tell," I replied; "except that it grows well, and is an excellent cover for quail, and grows best in black rotten soil. But Manchester men can give you information, for I think some fellows came out from there to look after it."

"You are right," blandly replied Mr. Jones; "the Manchester Chamber of Commerce sent out some gentlemen."

"They did not find out much," interrupted the host, "except that the prejudices of the natives were rather hard to overcome; and that they preferred the clumsy contrivances for cleansing used by their forefathers to all the improvements of modern times."

"Yes," said Jones, "they are prejudiced—"

"Hallo, Mr. Jones," I said, "so you allow that; and yet before dinner you told me that it was our system only, that kept these natives from not taking an interest in English or other improvements, and preferring to be half naked and eat ghee."

"I think he has got you there, Jones," said the host.

"No," said Jones; "the natives may be prejudiced in some things but not in all."

"Cotton only, I suppose," put in my father.

"Yes, Major Villars, cotton cleaning."

Coffee now being handed in, we adjourned to the

drawing-room, I taking very good care to avoid the member for the rest of the evening.

"Gentlemanly fellow that, isn't he?" said the Major as we drove back to St. Helens.

"Vulgar brute! I should like to kick him," I replied.

"My dear Philip," said my mother from her warm corner, "do not use such language and get excited about trifles."

"Trifles!" said my father, "I don't know what you consider trifles; but being contradicted every instant and held out as a sort of impostor, is not quite a trifle."

"Mr. Jones did not say Philip was an impostor," said my mother.

"No, he had better not," I said.

"I should have liked to have seen him," said the Major, quite in a passion at the very idea; "and I would have broken his head."

"A respectable proceeding for a Major and a Magistrate. Ah! Philip, I see you are as violent as your father. I am afraid he will never make you see how wrong it is to give way to temper."

"Humph!" growled the Magistrate, "here's a jobation; but I dare say Philip won't turn out such a blackguard as his brother."

"You always abuse Henry when you are angry; never making any allowances for him," said the wife somewhat nettled.

"Didn't I make an allowance for him, and didn't he always expend twice as much?" said the Major, chuckling over his wretched pun.

Good humour now was restored, and as it was a bright clear night, I determined on walking the rest of the way home, lighting my Manilla cheroot at the carriage lamps.

Next morning, having an appointment with the game-keeper, I was up with the lark, and had frightened some few hares and pheasants when it was time to return for family prayers and breakfast. My one arm was not strong enough to support the gun steadily, so almost all my shots were a failure.

"What! with one arm poaching?" said my father in answer to my morning's greeting. "Why I shall have to convict you for an infringment of the game laws. Where is your certificate?"

"Hang certificates," I said; "I come from a country in which the sparrow and the partridge count alike, and in which no one has a proprietory right, but all are eaten alike by rich and poor. I cannot understand game laws, or why paying £3 10*s*, allows a man to extend his murderous propensities from mere singing birds to hares and pheasants."

"It may be so," replied my father, the landed proprietor. "But do away with game laws, and where would your game be?"

"Why, scarcer, no doubt; but now I have *answered*, tell me what right except that of might,

have you to make me associate with felons, to ruin my wife and family by sending me to jail as a poacher, simply because wanting food, I catch and eat the hare or pheasant destroying my garden."

"The law says you shall not snare game, and if you come on a man's property it is trespass."

"All well, old gentleman," I said; "prosecute the man for trespass if you like; but it seems an unfair law that allows a man because he can pay for it, to call a hare or any game his, which two minutes before it was feeding on his estate, was feeding on a common, or the high road; actually it may have been high in the air on its way from Norway. Because men choose to go to a great expense in keeping up game-keepers, they are to be allowed to put the county to a greater, so as to assist them in punishing poachers."

"But your way there never would be any game in the country. If we could only punish a man for trespassing," said the Major,

"I think there would, as the wages of the game-keepers and the attendant expenses might go to pay for such birds as one liked best to eat. Where there is a demand, there is always a market; and though the scarceness might make game dearer, still the value would be but little more than at present. Indeed, I have heard that the value of every pheasant in England is more than twenty shillings, owing to the expense of preserving game. Any way I would rather that

every head of game in England were destroyed, than one should so often hear of those frays with poachers, in which human life is so often sacrificed. It seems to me horrible that a man, God's own image, should be shot, and perhaps hung, just to carry out game laws; and all that Jones or Smith, being rich enough to pay for a licence, should have sport."

"Perhaps you are right," said the Major, "Heaven knows I would rather every bird on my lands be destroyed, than that any one should suffer; but I am considered very mild on the subject; indeed, rather giving encouragement to poachers than otherwise, and this kindness is the reason why there is more game at St. Helens than elsewhere; for the poachers never bother me. However, breakfast is ready, so come along."

Breakfast over, the family party broke up; my father to look after some young plantations, my mother to household duties, and myself and sisters to the garden, where under the shade of an ivy-covered arbour, we talked of past occurrences.

"You hurt papa's feelings to-day talking about game laws and game-keepers," said Jane. "He has never been the same since Barwell was shot."

"Why," I said, turning to Ella, "you told me yesterday that Barwell died."

"So I did," she replied, "but I did not say how."

"*But,* Jane, dear," I asked, "what on earth has

Barwell's death and the governor's melancholy to do with each other?"

"Why," answered Jane, "it is a long story, and we never knew all about it until the trial; and from the evidence given against Duffin, who shot him, it appeared that Henry behaved shamefully, and left old Barwell to fight the two poachers. Henry ran away."

"Surely not," I said, "surely he did not bolt."

"Yes," said Ella, taking up my last word; "he did bolt, and was seen to do so by a mere boy, who getting a kind of confused account from Henry of what was being done to Barwell, went away to the rescue."

"Come now, Jane, it is a beautifully bright day, and there is lots of time to tell me the whole tale, I will be a most attentive listener."

"And smoker," added Ella.

"Very well," said Jane, "we don't mind smoking, but my story will be longer than you think. However, I shall tell you all, and can only regret to have to say so much against a brother, and that too a Major in the army."

"No," said Ella, interrupting; "he was, but is now plain Mr. Villars."

"There," replied Jane, "I wish it were otherwise; but now to the story."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

You know that ever since we were children, Barwell was papa's game-keeper, and so great a favourite, that let us complain of his crossness or roughness, papa never would listen. Well, none of us could make out why papa was so fond of him; but on the night that poor Barwell was killed, we were told of things that occurred years ago, and when you know, you will not be surprised at papa being so fond of him. I may be wrong in two or three things, if so Ella will correct me, but I shall not be far out, a sister does not easily forget a brother's disgrace.

At the time of papa's going as a cornet into the 19th Hussars, he took with him as servant, a young man, named Barwell, a son of grandpapa's coachman; Barwell not finding soldiering a very disagreeable kind of existence, afterwards enlisted, and became a Corporal in papa's troop, and as you may imagine, among the gallant fellows none were more *devoted to* Lieutenant Villars than Corporal Barwell.

Many was the hard fight they were in together; and in those days when a mess was very different from what one now understands it, often was the meal improved by the foraging propensities of the Corporal. Indeed, it was a common joke that the outlying picket on which Villars was, was sure to be well provided, all owing to a certain Corporal Barwell.

It was on the retreat to Corunna, when after a night's rear guard duty, and a sharp affair with the enemy in the morning, that papa, wrapping himself up in his cloak, during a short halt under some rocks that afforded shelter from the cutting north wind, went off to sleep, and was left by the retreating column, on their again resuming their march. After the half-starved, haggard, but brave fellows, had pushed on for some miles, Lieutenant Villars was missed; and from inquiries instituted, it was supposed that either he had during sleep been frozen to death, or had, as was a common occurrence been overtaken by the enemy, and become their prisoner. Any way it was useless further search or inquiry, and all mourned a good man and officer.

The idea of his officer perishing miserably, was more than could be borne patiently by one loving papa so dearly as did Corporal Barwell; and notwithstanding the risk of being thought a deserter, or being singled out for a rifle's mark; or, indeed, made prisoner by those who like hungry wolves hung

on the footsteps of the retreating column; the Corporal turned his jaded horse, and was once again trotting briskly towards the midday's halting place.

At him, not a shot was fired, not an enemy was seen. Indeed, not a sound was heard to break the stillness of the snow-clad scene, on every side were human beings, either silent in death, or wrapped in silence in the snow wreath, which ere long would form their winding sheet. Sometimes one, aware of the hideous danger of yielding to sleep, would stagger forward on the well marked tract, hoping yet to overtake the column; then, pale and numbed, he would stop one moment to rest, and then that moment's rest was turned into an eternal one. It was a weary awful sight; and the thought, that like unto these might now be his officer and best friend, hastened the Corporal onwards.

The spot was reached, and beneath a fir, bent over with the weight of snow; lay still and frozen the object of his search. No calling could awake that sleeper. The sleep seemed like that, that knows no waking.

The cold icy hand was clenched, and the rigid body appeared as if life had fled for ever.

Rising up the apparently lifeless body, and as a means of additional warmth wrapping his own well worn cloak round it, Corporal Barwell placed *papa* in front of himself on the saddle; and now

with his worn out and wretched charger again was on the road.

Stumbling and nearly falling, it was with no little difficulty that he kept the horse on the beaten tract, then as darkness began to make things indistinct, fresh horrors arose. Snow now falling, added, if possible, to poor Barwell's misery. Still he struggled on, and had come within two miles of the night's bivouac, when the horse, exhausted with its double load, stumbled, fell, and would rise no more. Collecting all his energy and fast failing strength, Corporal Barwell strived to carry his officer the remaining distance.

It was fearful work; often I heard he was nearly giving way, and taking one moment's deadly sleep or rest, on the snow around; but faint, tired, and hungry, he boldly struggled on, pouring the last drop of brandy from his flask down the throat of papa, and rubbing some snow to his own parched lips. Behind him, he could hear the hoarse panting of the gorged wolf, and around the jackall's wail, but these served only to make him more determined to reach the bivouac.

Two hours more toil, and Corporal Barwell had reached the bivouac; making over his precious burden to the surgeon's care, and having seen all arranged, the Corporal stretched himself before the fire, and ere long had forgotten his dangers in heavy slumber.

The usual remedies being applied, papa gradually recovered, and next day accompanied the regiment on its retreat; and by the time Corunna was fought, Captain Villars was perfectly recovered.

Papa was not the man to forget a kindness. He obtained the Corporal's promotion, and promised that so long as he lived, so great an act of bravery and kindness should not be forgotten.

On papa going on half-pay and taking this place, Barwell was made game-keeper and factotum; and this he continued to be until about three years ago, when he was shot by poachers."

"But how was that, is what I want to know?" I interrupted.

"Patience, young gentleman," said Jane, "I am coming to it."

Papa used at one time to preserve his game strictly, and was assisted in doing so by Barwell and Henry. Indeed, the latter made papa more strict than he otherwise would have been, for Henry was always telling him that no punishment could be severe enough for poachers, and made him punish them accordingly

For months past a gang of poachers had infested this part of the country, and had not spared our preserves, but search after them was generally futile, as the people working in the quarries rendered the fellows assistance, so that long before daylight

poachers were far down the river in the quarry men's punts and boats.

Some of these scamps were known, and once Barwell had had a scuffle with a huge fellow named Duffin, whom he found laying snares in the little copse; but Duffin's friends came to the rescue, and so beat Barwell, that he was dangerously ill for some time after. A warrant was issued for Duffin's apprehension, but we suppose he got timely notice, for he never was found.

Henry was about this time down with us on leave, and spending it in the usual manner, that is in shooting and smoking. One day, he and Barwell went away to what we call the Brake, rabbit shooting, and continued at it until nearly dusk; when turning homewards, who should they see crossing the stile and trying to hide himself in the shallow ditch under the hedge, but Duffin. Barwell was after him in an instant, calling on Henry to follow; but Henry, either through fear or not understanding what was said, stood still and looked on from the distance at the deadly struggle between the gamekeeper and poacher. The struggle was long, for both were strong men; frequently did Barwell call on Henry to assist, but no! Henry appeared paralysed, and remained at a distance. Suddenly another ruffian, hearing the voices, jumped the hedge, and with Duffin, succeeded in getting Barwell down and then beat him insensible; not, however, until

Barwell had called loudly on Henry saying he "was being murdered."

Alas! instead of this making Henry come to the rescue, it seemed but to increase his fear, for turning about he made the best of his way back to the house, calling loudly for help. Before this could come, Barwell had ceased to breathe; for the villain, Duffin, picking up the fallen gun, placed its muzzle to the temple of its prostrate owner, and added murder to his other crimes.

"How do you know all this?" I asked. "Did Henry say he saw all that went on, and yet never went to the rescue?"

No, said Jane, Henry made out a long story about not seeing in the dusk, and thinking assistance would be got easier from the house, he ran home to get it. Duffin and his companion were both taken next morning in Gloucestershire, and when tried at the Sessions were convicted and hung. The evidence that hung them was that of a little boy we used to call Johnny. He was always doing odds and ends about the house, and had that day gone with them in charge of the ferrets. He, it appeared, was some distance on a-head returning to the house, when he heard Barwell calling to Henry for assistance; but Henry stood still, until the other man jumped the hedge, when he fairly ran away, and in passing the boy, said, "they are killing Barwell." The boy ran on towards the place where they were beating Bar-

well; but just as he came near, he saw Duffin fire the gun into Barwell's head, and being then afraid, he hid for some time, and eventually came and told us all that had occurred. In the sentence of death being passed upon the prisoners, the judge said, that "nearly all, if not the actual murder would have been avoided, had Henry Villars shewn but common courage; and that such pusillanimous conduct was disgraceful in any man, more particularly so in one wearing Her Majesty's uniform."

The result of this speech you may imagine. Henry was permitted to resign his commission; and from that time to this papa has been an altered man, seldom does he or any of us shew much joy here. The place has lost its charm, and we think that Henry's coming here so often, only increases papa's melancholy by stirring up old reminiscences.

"Thank you, Jane," said I, "but what makes the mother still love this Henry so, for I can see she does, notwithstanding all that has occurred?"

"A mother's love can never, I believe, be entirely extinguished," said Jane; "but, unfortunately, papa makes his conduct the theme of discussion between them, and this leads to dispute."

"I wish Henry would leave the country," I said.

"His doing so would break mamma's heart," said Ella.

"Pooh, I don't believe in broken hearts, and

believe that in both sexes hearts are very like India rubber, capable of an immense deal of stretching."

"Perhaps you have never known what it is to love dearly," said Jane.

"I don't know," I replied, "whether it is fair to answer your question with a question, and ask how you felt after your love affair with a certain old Indian? But I once really did love what I thought to be an honest and good girl; but on proposing and being accepted, I discovered that she was a humbug and would not risk anything for me, fearing indeed to promise to marry me without the consent of an old harridan aunt; and as I was not likely to obtain this—"

"Well, what then?" said Ella, shewing the usual anxiety possessed by her sex in things pertaining to births and marriages.

"Why, I was not exactly kicked out of the house," I replied, "but retired gracefully, vowing vengeance against your sex generally, and these two in particular."

"What became of them afterwards?" asked Jane.

"I forget; I left the Hills afterwards on service, and have been so ill for the past three or four years as not to trouble myself about them."

"Oh, then," said Ella, "this happened whilst you were up at Nainee Tal, and you never told us anything about it."

"Of course not," I said, "you surely don't think

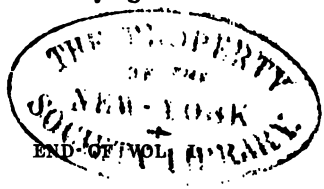
I was going to be such a fool as to tell you all about my being sold, and get in return yards of condolence and banter."

"I should not have laughed at you, Philip," said Jane; "but now I suppose you are a confirmed woman hater."

"No, I don't rave about them though, or think them half the angels novels and poets make them out."

"Think thus always," said Jane, "and probably you will be happy in your marriage."

"Then I fear I shall be a long time before being happy if I only wait for marriage. At present I see no probability of it, though some day, victim like, I may be led to the slaughter; poor, miserable man that I am! But it is getting cold, so let us be moving." And thus saying we rose and sauntered homewards.



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